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A ROUMANIAN DIARY

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Translated from the German by
AGNES NEILL SCOTT

HANS CAROSSA

A ROUMANIAN DIARY

"Wrest the light from the jaws of the serpent."

LONDON
MARTIN SECKER
1929

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AT Libermont in the north of France, on the 4th of October, 1916, I broke Madame Varnier's little bevelled glass mirror on the washstand, and went to see her to make my apologies and offer to pay for it. The old lady was naturally rueful over the loss of such a fine glass, but she concealed her feelings and smilingly countered my apologies by insisting that the breaking of a mirror was of small importance when half the world was falling to pieces. Then she recounted the long list of her possessions which had been destroyed in the war, and all *pour rien!* By a stroke of luck I had just received a package of chocolate macaroons from Munich, and I gave it to her intact; she accepted it without protest, and took it away at once in her trembling hands to share it with her husband. Later, as if in return for my gift, she set an indoor plant in

my window, a kind of araucaria not unlike a little fig tree with dark green leaves that stick stiffly out as if daring one to disarrange the formal beauty of the whole. She keeps coming in from time to time, goes up to the little tree and blows imaginary dust from its leaves, drums a little with her fingers on the window-panes, sighs, mutters to herself, and goes away again. From the Somme beneath us the thunder of the guns disturbs our peace; it sounds as if there were a great fire roaring in the chimney. All the windows rattle; the doors bang as if someone were slamming them in a rage.

. . . . .

Every day I have to ride out on duty towards Guiscard, and I like to imagine that I can sense the nearness of the sea; as if it were sending me a greeting from the free world outside which destiny has shut off from us Germans—who knows for how long? The sense of the sea is the one thing which transfigures this landscape for

me. Otherwise it is not good for me here, so alien is every tree and every stone. The slightly faded blue of the sky over the empty wastes and low hills, the paved military roads which Bonaparte drew with a ruler, the grey straw-ricks with pointed roofs like negro huts, on which jackdaws and ravens sit watching us—all these have no associations for us and tell us none of their secrets, although we sometimes get an inkling of them. Were it not for the German peasant soldiers ploughing the ancient earth and our young strong-breasted horses grazing in their paddocks without saddle or bridle, there would be nothing that the eye could rest on with satisfaction.

5th October.

The Division demands a statement of our fighting strength. The gas-masks are to be tested once more. The whole battalion is to be paraded to-morrow, and I must weed out all the men I think not

strong enough for arduous tasks. They will be drafted into reserve battalions; those who are left have to be inoculated against cholera. Not a word about our destination. The cholera inoculation indicates the eastern front. Both officers and men are in great spirits, as always when a change is impending, although their nerves have not yet recovered from Maurepas. They are all sick again of this so-called rest camp, with its short rations, incessant inspections, drill, roll-calls, alarms, and ceremonial salutes to potentates in spick-and-span uniforms. Many are pining for the harder, more dangerous, but freer and more self-respecting life under fire.

In the evening.

For the third time I have just read over Vally's letter, which is nearly all about little Wilhelm. What a fine thing that one person should be able to reconstruct distant events for another by mentioning some trifling detail! The boy was recently

running in the garden from bush to bush during a wild tempest, and finally thrust his hand right into the middle of a box-hedge where the wind was blowing its hardest ; then with his fist clenched he ran to his mother crying in breathless exultation : "Now I've caught the wind" ; and he opened his hand cautiously, only to find to his great astonishment that there was nothing in it but a few leaves and twigs.

8th October.

The inspection lasted the whole day. I spent the evening with Lieutenant T. in his quarters. He was morose because he had such piles of outgoing letters to censor, and after some growling let me help him a little again. No letter can be passed which gives any hint of our coming departure. Almost involuntarily I looked for the bold, clear writing of young Glavina, who often writes such wonderful letters to his friends. "What kind of a spiritual unity can that be which can be

disintegrated in a moment by the explosion of a stupid shell? " I read this time.

PRONVILLE,

9th October, 1916.

At about three in the morning I was wakened by Rehm. I drank my tea in bed and lay for another quarter of an hour thinking over many things. My packing did not take long. I left a few sketches hanging on the wall as a sacrifice to the infernal powers. Wilhelm's drawing, a thing half like a ship and half like a bird, I took with me after all. I nearly left little Regina's wax hand lying in the drawer: I had overlooked the small box yesterday when I cleared the things out. It's two years ago now. What ideas children get! But it was really her mother's fault. Why did she make the girl carry a wax hand up to the Mariahilfberg? No wonder that Regina thought, " The Doctor has taken more trouble than the Mother of God, why shouldn't

he have one?" Of course, she insisted that I was to carry it about with me always, and after all it's not difficult to stow away. I carry it for superstition, if not for love; the one is nearly as powerful as the other.

The old Varniers were already up and dressed when I went into the kitchen to say good-bye and to thank them. They waved my thanks away; "On remplit son devoir," said the old lady politely. But they pressed my hand warmly. About half-past four we set off in the dark and reached Ham at about half-past eight. The brief day soon declined over our slow advance by way of Cambrai; it was dark when we began the last march towards Pronville. The moon was veiled by clouds, but its light gleamed on fields in the distance. A cooing as of turtle-doves came down the wind, and dry leaves rustled like mice along the ground. The Somme valley was raging as if the end of the world had come; the sky was

delirious with flares and flashes of gun-fire.

Beans and tinned meat were served out from the kitchens at midnight by the roadside; that was our dinner and supper combined, and it tasted good. We could have done with another plateful each; but supplies have run critically short, and it would be hardly advisable to set the men an example of unchecked appetite. Before we finished eating the clouds thinned away to shreds; the sky was "peeled," as we say in Bavaria, and the moon came out.

The road was full of marching columns. First we met some Prussian infantry, who gave us bad news, Maurepas lost, Péronne in danger; they complained that our artillery was very ineffective; if it weren't for the incredible feats of the infantry, declared an officer, the front would have been completely smashed in. Not long behind them came Prussian artillery who confirmed the bad news, raged over the

shortcomings of the infantry, and could not understand why we laughed when they swore that it was only the artillery which was holding the front together.

French prisoners marched past in their dark capes, shrugging up their shoulders against the cold. Some of our young hobbledehoys, mustering their scraps of French, strolled up to them, and tried to ask such questions as, what wages were earned in France, what kind of food did they have there, when peace was likely to come, and so on. The prisoners seemed not to understand ; their pale faces were set and impenetrable in the moonlight. Situated as they were in the middle of their ravaged country, they could hardly be blamed for making little response to the naïve good-nature of our South Germans.

At last we encountered a regiment of Bavarian artillery on its way to rest quarters. Private Wimmer of the Sixth Company trod heavily on my foot, rushed away with the scantiest of apologies, and

flashed his pocket-lamp in the face of each artilleryman, one after the other. "Put out that light!" was bellowed at him. "But it's the eighth," he cried desperately, "where my father's a gunner!" yet he obediently switched off his light. By good luck the batteries were ordered to halt, and in a few minutes eager questioning succeeded in finding Gunner Wimmer. He was a lean man with greying hair, a hard, clean-shaven face covered with small wrinkles, and a mouth pinched at the corners; the moonlight fell directly upon him so that I could see his eyes widening with astonishment and joy. The two men stood gazing at each other, holding hands; for a long time they found no words. The news of this extraordinary meeting soon travelled round and the men retired to leave the two alone. At last the father took a little package out of his pocket and gave it to his son. The company commanders delayed our departure, but finally the order rang out.

The boy, back in his place again, involuntarily accorded his emotion the sole expression possible for a soldier—as he marched off he gave the regulation salute to his father, although the latter had no rank. It was a moving gesture, which drew a good-humoured smile from all the others.

We reached Pronville after midnight. I was directed to a large building like a château, standing in its own park. In the hall appeared an officer's servant who advised me confidentially to look for other quarters in the neighbourhood, where clean rooms were to be had, for this place was swarming with lice. I suspected at once—which proved to be the truth—that he had a purpose in saying so. His master had been living in great comfort in two rooms one of which would have to be vacated for me, and the faithful servant was anxious to spare him this pain. Rehm saw through it, too, and relieved me of answering by declaring amiably that we

were not afraid of lice, and might even be bringing some of our own ; whereupon the other vanished like a ghost sprinkled with holy water.

12th October.

A store of Edam cheeses was discovered in the cellar of our quarters ; the jubilation was immense. The Major came up at once and handled the situation like a good officer ; the precious cheeses were to be tumbled out on tent-sheets in sight of everybody in the courtyard, cleaned from dust and mould, and shared equally among the companies. The sergeant who counted them out observed that they rang pretty hard when they fell on the ground, so he took out his knife to try one, but it could not be cut, it was hard as stone. The soldiers stood around in silence ; they had all dreamed of the rich soft yellow cheese behind those radish-red skins, which had gone a little grey, and they would not yet give up all hope. Some could contain themselves no

longer, and also whipping out their knives stabbed at the nearest red balls, but found the same stolid resistance. That drove many away, some hooting with contempt and others with a resigned look, as if they had known they would not be in luck. But the Major, being a good housekeeper, was unwilling to give up such a welcome find, and ordered the cheeses to be sawn open, hoping they might at least be good for grating like Parmesan. They were not only hard all through, however, they were permeated by a network of reddish-green mould which also was as hard as stone. The men who had still waited turned away with sour smiles, saying nothing; only Private Kristl could not refrain from giving vent to his usual sense of injury, and proposed sending the cheeses to the Kaiser's court at Spa. He spoke so loudly that the Major could not help hearing, but as he had known for a long time that Kristl was looking for trouble so

as to get home again by way of prison, he paid no attention to the man's insolence.

Ten minutes later a good game of football with the red cheeses was in full swing. Even Kristl had quietened down. He leaned against a tree whittling an animal figure out of a sawed-off piece, using the streaks of mould very skilfully to give it a striped appearance. But the cheese proved too brittle; the half-finished figure crumbled away, and he threw it violently on the ground.

The evening is growing cold. From a towering pile of brown-edged clouds shoot broad slanting rays of sunlight like the arms of a windmill. A new battle is raging at Bapaume; some think that we are going to be rushed up there. But a rumour is circulating that we are bound for the Roumanian front. The post has just come in. Our little boy is all right again, and spends all his time drawing and building.

. . . . . .

On the 13th of October towards evening we entrained at Aubigny-au-Bac for an unknown destination. It was a long and wearisome business. Our little commander still puts no trust in the adaptability and inventiveness of mere Swabians and Bavarians, and insisted on doing everything himself, stowing away every single field-kitchen and machine-gun. Everybody laughed and swore at him like the very devil while with set and worried face and wild, spasmodic gestures he yelled orders which nobody understood, until at last the station Commandant lost patience with him and threatened to send the train off in five minutes whether it was ready or not. This was a piece of luck for our agitated chief; all hands set to at once with a will. For though he is often too short with us and we rather enjoy seeing him discomfited now and then, he is our comrade after all, and his shabby faded cape stiff with the tallow droppings of countless dug-outs and plastered with

mud from all corners of France and Flanders is much more honourable in our eyes than the brand-new magnificence of the station Commandant. Without waiting for orders everybody set to work, and in a bare quarter of an hour the train was ready.

It began to rain from heavy clouds ; I found a place beside two company commanders, ate another apple, and wrapped myself in my blanket. A touch of fever seemed to be haunting me—how glad I was that days of rest were coming and a long journey ! I soon fell asleep and dreamed of many things. Once I saw Vally sitting at a little table with Wilhelm. They had been dealing out rows of cards, and were gazing down at them, heads propped on hands, like chess-players. Little Regina came in later and sat down beside them and did as they were doing. Suddenly she drew out a sealed letter and held it to me without looking up from the cards, saying : " It's

nothing pressing. Only a message from the Holy Ghost." When I awoke my back was damp with sweat, and I noticed that the fever had gone.

14th October.

Breakfast in Charleroi. A year ago at the very same hour I passed through it on my way to the front. The conical slag-heap has more green on its sides ; slopes of grass will soon cover it ; here and there a little tree has already sprung up. I was again delighted to see the neighbouring canals with their rows of poplars queerly twisted by the sea wind, the old men and women hauling their comfortable barges along by ropes and the fair pretty children who run up so confidently to ask for something to eat. At the foot of the black slag-heap is a stagnant pool covered with oily scum out of which long brittle reeds stick up like the spears of a drowned phalanx. There are sheep chewing the cud in the grass ; the sky is grey and lowering, streaked with silvery scars.

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15th October.

The others are still asleep ; I am the only one awakened by the light and the cold. The train is crossing a high viaduct over a valley full of mist ; there is a shadowy village rising to a point in front of a dimly discernible line of dark blue hills, and the sun is visible over it as a diffused radiance in the network of clouds. Chimney-stalks belch out yellowish-grey smoke tinged with purple at the edges. I looked into the heart of a smelting furnace, a red-hot glow with black men going to and fro like the salamanders I dreamt of in the fire as a child. After that brief glimpse I fell asleep again.

. . . . .

We are running eastwards faster and faster. To-day I will not read the name of a single station, not an advertisement, not a placard, not a village sign ; nor will I listen if the others mention them. I will look at the nameless landscape and

mark its slow changes and the varying skies above it.

. . . . .

2.30 *p.m.*

Reddish-brown fields everywhere, touched with the light green of winter wheat; the trees are already yellower than in Pronville and Libermont. A reddish road winds towards little villages, and runs beyond them to heights thick with trees and brushwood. We pass slowly through a small station; an old peasant woman stands alone behind the barrier. Her black head-kerchief projects like a small pointed roof over her brow, and the very wrinkles in her face rise towards each other in Gothic arches. The hands of the station clock indicate the wrong time, and under it, fastened together, lie church bells with their tongues torn out and their mottoes and ornamental figures plastered with wet leaves. They must be intended for melting down into cannon. So this time I have

crossed the Rhine in my sleep. We are in Germany.

16*th October.*

It is raining, and one cannot stop shivering. When I came to myself just now the others laughed and said I had slept for twelve hours and missed two meals. But I must have wakened once, perhaps it was yesterday evening. We were just passing Leipzig, and I was amazed to see the town unharmed beneath such a threatening sky, amazed that every house and spire was not in ruins; a curious hallucination of fever.

The hours begin to be wearisome; the others are smoking and playing cards; I have nearly learned by heart an article on atoms and electrons, and have looked up various extracts in my notebook from Glavina's letters, which I never quite forgot after reading, and was able later to write down fairly accurately. Now I am trying to expand one or other of them in my own words, but I am afraid they may

turn into something else and lose their original youthful ring.

. . . . .

"There were once savage times when the victor tore the heart from his vanquished foe's breast and ate it up, hoping thereby to inherit the dead man's virtue and courage. Granted that this was a childish and gruesome proceeding, yet it was not so completely senseless and shameful as it looks at first sight. Do not hate and love grow from the same root? Have not countless souls been nourished on Our Lord's heart for two thousand years? I feel that not one of us is fated to a long life—let us acknowledge it, then! Let us consciously and joyfully offer ourselves in sacrifice to the unknown spirit of the future, before some wretched chance overtakes us and dooms us to a meaningless death!"

. . . . .

"O clear yet turbid years of childhood! when one was astounded because the

important and perilous events of the world happened in the exact proportion needed to fill a newspaper, no more and no less ! Usually when the papers came to our house my mother and father shared them, studying the printed columns with eager and close attention ; the room had to be kept quiet, and I did not dare to speak. But this anxious state passed over like an eclipse of the sun ; the papers were flung down casually, and all their strangeness was thus cancelled and made harmless. Last night I had a curious dream. I was a child again, and walking over stony mountains through a thunderstorm. I had a white paper in my hand, and did not lift my eyes from it. If I ask myself now what was on that white sheet I must confess that it was blank, not a letter or a sign on it ; and yet I was enraptured by what I read there. Low rolling clouds rained upon it, lightning flashes flickered over it, the sky and the crags thundered, and from the distance the uncanny spirits

of the dead called to me, but I read ineffably blissful words upon that blank paper, and was unmoved by the storm and the cries of the dead."

. . . . .

"Oh my friend, I myself would gladly raise an army for a wonderful and still unventured campaign; but the time is not yet ripe, the enemy whose ubiquitous presence we feel keeps himself hidden, the password is not yet translated into human speech, and those I have to rouse are still sunk deep in slumber. Is it unwise for me to do as kings' sons did of old and serve for a time in another army, so that I may learn the art of war? Yes, in seeking out toil and danger wherever they offer, we are preparing ourselves for nobler toil and more essential danger. I feel like a doer who is still unaware of his deed. Wrest the light from the jaws of the serpent! What voice is it that often sounds this command in my ears when I am fast asleep?"

On the 17th of October I woke for the first time with a clear eye, but there was nothing to see at first but endless mists which covered even the names of the stations. By my compass we were heading south-east. When, after midday, the mists began to clear, we thought we were approaching great beds of reeds; they proved later to be stubble fields of maize. The vapours rose and gathered in clouds which separated towards evening into countless little pointed tents, whitening the fields of the sky in the distance. In a wide-spreading landscape with a background of mountains the Danube drew nearer, jewelled with autumn islands, one of which shimmered with silver poplar leaves as if with blossom. On a round hill stood a small Greek temple with a bronze dome which caught the last rays of the evening sun. From Kisgöd, which lies half hidden beneath the red plumage of old acacias, we ran with increasing speed towards the Hungarian capital.

Kitchen-Orderly Klingensteiner brought us candles, and stammering with delight informed us that at Budapest we were to be quartered in the city. Men fell on each other's necks for joy; boxes were unlocked and light shoes and soft caps pulled out. Lieutenant H. and I decided to visit a café in Andrássy Street; someone wanted to see the Parliament House, and someone else the castle, and every one rushed to the window. But near the first suburbs the train curved away to the south and carried us with relentless speed from the gleaming spires of the city into the night. Caps and shoes were packed up again, the candles stuck as usual into empty tins, and a game of cards begun on a tent-sheet spread over our knees. Klingensteiner, with tea and bread and sausage on a tray, hardly dared to come in, expecting a shower of abuse; he was almost in tears as he apologised, saying that he must have misunderstood something the Adjutant said. The Major

came in later with a sour face ; he spread such gloom that our very candles seemed to be quenched. He is more restless than active by nature, and to see men doing nothing upsets him. He looked from one to the other, and finally asked me about the health of the men. I was thoughtless enough to answer casually that they were all right. He remarked that it wasn't so easy to settle as all that, and it would be best for me to go up and down the train every day with a subordinate whenever there was a long halt and enquire particularly in every carriage whether any one was ill. Thinking of the suggestive effects of such a question I smiled in a most indecorous fashion, which the old man noticed with annoyance ; he sharpened his suggestion into a command and stumped out without saying good night. Before falling asleep we talked him over for a while. Lieutenant H., who is well up in Norse gods and sagas, remembered an ancient belief that evil

powers are turned into good if they can only be once tricked into laughing or even smiling ; he thought it would be advisable to try that on our surly superior.

18th October.

In the wood-margent hidden
lay the morning sun.
We struck out from the strand.
It sprang to the water,
and over the stream
made a shining pathway.

These old lines came into my head to-day as I awoke just as we were crossing a river in whose depths the sun's reflections accompanied us. I had been wideawake several times in the night while the train was standing still somewhere, and thinking we had not come very far I imagined the river was still the Danube ; it was, however, the Tisza. Soon we saw farm-houses in the wide plain, with pumps as high as houses, herds of hairy black swine, and young land-girls with head-

kerchiefs of striped blue and white who were gathering cucumbers at the edge of a field. When the soldiers waved to them one of the girls crossed her arms over her breast and then flung them out with a foreign impetuosity towards the departing train.

. . . . .

In Békéscsaba a pretty little sky-blue officer on furlough darted in, a Hungarian cavalryman full of boyish high spirits, who ruffled it like a humming-bird among us solemn German owls. He called us all "du," as is the custom among our Allies, gave us the half of his cigarettes, showed us his fiancée's photograph, assured us unconditionally of his eternal friendship, and did not forget to remind us that we were bound for death or glory, without any alternative. When we approached Arad he handed each of us a post card with his photograph, and asked for ours in return. We hunted in all our pockets but in vain ; at last, however, I came on a

lovely portrait by Holdt of the dancer Clotilde von Derp, which had been sent to Libermont, and with a bad conscience I gave it to him. "Your fiancée?" cried the Hungarian, breaking out into raptures of boundless gratitude, and while he was appreciating her charms like a connoisseur I wondered whether I ought to confess that I had never even seen the lovely dancer. But I decided that that would be stupid, so I suffered myself to be congratulated and envied as the luckiest of fellows.

In Arad I bought two bottles of Tokay and stowed one away among the medical stores; the other I shared with Raab, so that we soon got into the right frame of mind for carrying out the Major's order of the day before. We stopped at every carriage and insisted on knowing how all the men were. Some of them smiled in embarrassment, and some were scared because they thought we had some mean trick up our sleeves. As soon as they were

assured that we were in earnest, however, first one and then another began to feel a twinge, or a heaviness, or an acute pain ; and many a fine fellow who would have staked his oath on his sound health five minutes earlier began to think that he was qualifying for a hospital bed. I contented myself for the time being with twelve reported sick ; but it would have been an easy matter to unearth forty or fifty of them. My report, which I presented after lunch in the station at Arad, caused as much consternation as I had expected, and when I most respectfully stated my grounds for objecting to the new procedure I met with no opposition. I added consolingly that I had not consigned any of my sick to hospital, but would do my best to look after them on the train. Towards evening we travelled between wooded hills along the banks of another river, which accompanied us from then on : it was the Maros.

PARAJD,

19th October, 1916.

Shortly before midnight we arrived in the station of Maros-Vásárhely, but only for the briefest of halts. The staff and the Fifth Company had to go further up the mountains to Parajd. During the quarter of an hour which we spent in the waiting-rooms we were besieged by women and old men of all classes who begged us with desperate persistence for a little tobacco. Profound dejection was visible in all their faces; the sudden stoppage of the drug to which they had been accustomed for centuries weighed on them much more heavily than hunger and enemy invasions.

At about half-past one we entrained on the narrow-gauge railway. I thought that I could manage for five hours in my cloak, and left my two blankets behind with the heavy baggage. But all the windows in the train were broken, the cold increased

with the mileage, and the rain turned into snow which the wind blew in upon us. I was frozen when, about six in the morning, the little turret of Parajd came into sight. Then for four hours we stood beside the station among torn-up railway lines with broken telephone wires dangling over them like shattered bundles of nerves. At length it came out that our night journey had been quite unnecessary and was due to the negligence of a General Staff officer. Young and old raged and grumbled ; but we all fell silent when real misfortune came stalking down the street towards us. The station was beset by countless bands of refugees, and from the street leading out of it we saw Austrian stretcher-bearers advancing carefully carrying three small muffled shapes. These were the children of a refugee family who had found a live hand-grenade while playing, and in wrestling over it had touched it off. The explosion had killed the mother outright as she was lighting a

fire for cooking and severely wounded the three children. The grandmother, a Saxon from Transylvania, walked beside the silent procession weeping and saying that the Kaisers and kings of the whole world should be told about such happenings, so that their consciences might be touched and they might stop making those godless wars. Meanwhile the sun had all at once cleared the mists, and lit up a high mountain which struck us all with amazement. Its lower slopes were of a bleached green intersected by rocks, then came a narrow girdle of fir trees, which looked as if it had been carefully fitted round, and above that soared a mighty peak of glittering snow into the dissolving grey of the sky. This glorious apparition enchanted everybody ; even the old grandmother fell silent ; and as for me, dare I admit that in a second the heart-rending sight of the three wounded children was blotted out? It vanished before the marvel of that vision, as if it were only a

temporary accident, like the most of life, while yonder on the sky-line stood an immutable mystery which had long ago accepted all our sorrows and sufferings.

We were assigned to our quarters at about eleven o'clock. I put my weariness aside and only after sick duty and foot inspection did I make up a little of my lost sleep. Close on midnight, while we were still sitting talking and reading, we heard the trotting and jingling of horses in the street, then the house bell was rung timidly. Somebody begged for admission, although the door was not locked. It was the owner of the house, an elderly man who had fled with his family from the Roumanians, and had now stolen back alone to find out what his position was. He prayed us courteously to let him have a little bedroom, and stood patiently in front of his own house, now brilliantly lit and full of strangers, until his request was granted. The Major himself went downstairs to welcome him, and offered

him supper; but the man refused it, being quite content to secure a bare corner in his own house.

20th October.

To-day is a holiday, and we have managed at last to get the typhus vaccination done which has been due since August. Two large schoolrooms were vacated for us. The seats had been piled on top of each other to leave us more space. The master's cane and chalk were still lying on his desk, and pictures were hanging on the wall with examples of plants, animals and all the human races of the world. I was a little apprehensive of this vaccination, and would gladly have postponed it once more. For the new needles for my syringes, which I have asked for so many times, have still not come, and the old ones are twisted at the point into nasty little barbs, which makes it very painful both to have them thrust in and drawn out. But there was no help

for it, and I had to make the best of things, so I hit finally on the idea of doing a little by-play to distract the attention of my victims. First I stripped and inflicted the horrible jab on myself, keeping my face well under control. Then it was the turn of Rehm and Raab ; they were well prepared and took good care not to wince. Then I pressed into my service the pictures of the various native races, and while I hacked at the poor fellows' skins I entertained them with all I had ever read about Indians and Malays. I told about the strange customs of some wild tribes who beat their king-elect nearly to death the day before he is crowned, so that often enough he survives his accession only for a very short time : nor did I forget the Fiji Islanders, who with many tears bury their beloved fathers alive in the firm conviction that they will live for ever in the next world in the full strength and beauty of their last days. The good fellows drank it all in, and in

face of such reported cruelties really seemed to think nothing of my vicious little jabs. When all the companies were finished the Major himself came in to be vaccinated, but jumped so violently that the needle broke off short, whereupon he expressed his feelings with great unpleasantness. He certainly was at a disadvantage compared with the men, for I had to scarify him in respectful silence without holding forth on savage customs or anything else.

The hour before supper I spent in sleep. The vaccine had its usual effect on me ; I dreamed continuously. It seemed to me that there were long years of waking, thinking, and brooding behind me. At the moment, however, I was sitting beside a French hearth together with Vally, Stefanie, little Wilhelm, some friends, and Regina, who was on the edge of the circle. We were shivering and stretching out our hands to the fire. Regina was wearing her black school-

dress with a red belt. Her hand was tied up, but then everybody was in bandages. Wilhelm had a black patch over one eye. Yet we were all gay and talked a lot about our early life. Suddenly Regina said: "Men are a bad lot. They are afraid of me, and run away to France to the devil." Then all the others laughed out loud, but as they laughed they became very restless, then quite transparent; finally they vanished one after the other up the chimney in the flames. When I awoke the post had just come in, and the clear realities of life soon dispersed the delusions of sleep. Wilhelm had added a few lines too; it was probably a hard task for him. "A man on leave," he wrote, "told us you were going to Transylvania. I am glad. There's gold there in the rocks and rivers. Oskar Appel learned that in geography. Take as much as you can and bring it back to me. I could do with it." The letter was attached to a fine silver-grey cloak with a broad dark-

blue collar, which most of our officers when they saw it indignantly characterised as contrary to regulations. Only Generals of artillery at the very least could wear such broad collars; I must have it altered at once by the regimental tailor! But the Major laughed and said that for Landsturm medical officers there were no particular regulations, and that I could wear it with a good conscience; it would only be to my advantage.

SZENTLÉLEK,

21st October, 1916.

Before we left Parajd at the fall of dusk the Major consulted me. He was suffering from sciatica; he was feverish and could hardly sit on his horse for pain, but he wanted to stick to his duty and keep out of hospital. Half between jest and earnest he finished up by ordering me officially to visit him in the evening and have him cured before morning. It occurred to me that I must still have some strong laud-

anum powders in my pocket-book, but I said nothing about them.

It required thinking over. He is an unpleasant little creature, bullying and irascible, but he is unpleasant to his superiors as well as to his inferiors, which is rare in the army. He never allows people to feel comfortable when he's about—but is it to feel comfortable that we're here? He knows how to keep us all in order—but can I deny that discipline is good for us? And a man who is always stirring us up is much more likely to strengthen us in the long run than one who lets things slide. No, the little grey demon is one of us, after all, and shares our fortunes—perhaps the powders may help him; let him have them!

We climbed slowly up the road to Szentlélek which a hot wind was drying. The sky looked strange; it called up again my old fancy that every town and every stretch of country influences the formation of the clouds above it. I saw

white effulgent balls with black cores, and between them surges as of a sea throwing up spray, with a grey bank in the background set with tapering silver trees. Soon we became aware that we were traversing one of the richest salt deposits of Europe ; there were continual outcrops of pure white rock-salt among the grey marl. Many of the men broke off bits when we halted, and after examining them closely put them carefully in their haversacks as if they were precious jewels.

In the villages the houses are all coloured the same dull blue, and are encircled by verandahs with slender wooden posts which help to support the four-square steeply pitched roofs. The ridges of those roofs are notched unequally like saws, and look like backbones stretched over the houses. Old men and women, sad but friendly, were standing at the doors ; once a band of black-eyed Magyar women pushed forward and

screamed the monstrous cruelties of the Roumanians, but some fair-haired German women, who had lived in the village all their lives, thoughtfully and with an obvious attempt to be just modified those exaggerated complaints.

About midday we reached the large village of Szentlélek. We did not enter it but camped with all our baggage on a common enclosed by hedges, where our field-kitchens were at once set a-going. People returning from Sunday Mass with enormous prayer-books under their arms came flocking from all sides, the men hesitatingly, the women with an airy and confident step. The latter made voluble and hospitable gestures, suddenly darted into the houses and brought back baskets of fruit and pitchers of milk. The village had suffered from the Roumanian advance only three days before, and was now so thankful to see the Germans that it exhausted itself in hospitality. Milk foamed in all the mess-tins, and golden

pearmains filled every pocket. Slowly the men too came up, with the aged priest in the van. The invaders had punished him for having German books in his study by confiscating all his consecrated wine and on top of that his golden spectacles. While he was telling us this with humorous resignation in his halting German, Lieutenant N. fished out a carefully hoarded bottle of Burgundy ; the old man accepted it without protest as an offering to the church, and promised to say his next Mass for the giver. The hope of getting some tobacco drove the rest of the men nearer and nearer, until some queer bartering was going on. One soldier got a dozen eggs for three cigarettes, and another a fat goose for two packets of pipe tobacco. The sick of the village concentrated on me. The ambulance waggon was unlocked, and bandages and medicine lavishly given out until Raab reminded me in horror that we would get no fresh supplies in the

mountains. Meanwhile the regimental band had caught us up, and was now playing Magyar folk-songs in the middle of the common. The sick forgot their ailments, soldiers and girls danced together, and everything became festive.

By three o'clock it was time for us to take up our quarters so as to keep any battalions who might be on our heels from attempting to claim them. I have a room with a cross-beamed roof in an old farm-house. It is very dark and dismal inside ; the window is small and the couch narrow and hard. I have seen nobody as yet but the farmer, an unhealthy morose-looking man who avoids us. Round the sunny verandah outside is a buzzing swarm of tiny wood-wasps, who have honeycombed the posts and railings and fly incessantly in and out of their holes. Everything is rotten and crumbling, which makes the brand-new and lavishly decorated front gate all the more remarkable. It has high wide doors

with beautiful lattice-work and finely carved and painted panels, on each of which a design of plants and animals is wreathed round a blue candlestick with a yellowish-red candle burning in it, while a green snake writhes upwards from below. Above the door-posts stretches a long ark-like construction with red doves painted over it, between which real doves fly out and in through round openings. Although at first sight the gate gives a strange impression of having been stolen from some great house and added as an afterthought, yet longer acquaintance discloses its kinship with the main building out of which it has grown. It was certainly a queer idea to begin rénewing the house from the gate inwards, but one can guess what the whole is going to be. The war has interrupted this project too, and perhaps that is why the farmer is so shy and depressed ; because he cannot renovate his farm and feels himself sinking into decay. " Who builds,

builds up himself—" that old saying applies to him.

. . . . .

After sick inspection I was ordered to the Major. He was lying shaken with fever in a broad bed covered with sheepskins. He proved very obstreperous when I wanted to give him the powders.

" What do I want with that poison ? " he cried. " There's nothing more outrageous than putting chemical substances into one's blood ! "

I retorted that we ourselves are composed of many chemical substances, which sometimes combine wrongly with each other, and need the introduction of a new substance to disperse the wrong combinations. He still hesitated, so I reminded him that sick animals often hunt out plants and leaves which they do not usually eat and which cure them rapidly. He admitted the force of this and took the powder almost eagerly.

I spent the evening with some officers

in my quarters. One of my morning patients had sent in two ducks, which we had roasted, with new cider to drink. We were still under the influence of our happy day on the common and many felt that peace was bound to come soon. According to one, the message of liberation for the world was to come from the German Kaiser, another pinned his faith to the Czar, and a third to President Wilson. Many of those dear fellows perhaps felt a premonition that death was not far away, and by a miraculous transposition saw the end of the war approaching.

The housewife meanwhile hovered around us, a woman no longer young, with a solid figure, but gracious and harmonious movements. She had bright grey eyes, with dark and slightly swollen rings under them congested with fine blue veins, and rough red hair peeping out from under her black head-kerchief. She tasted the cider and the roast duck, and in return gave us apples and plums and

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taught us Magyar and Roumanian words. She had at first taken me for a military chaplain and treated me with great shyness, but when she discovered that I was an ordinary unanointed man she became confidential and singled me out for honour as her lodger and the oldest among the guests, putting her arm solicitously round me every time she asked if I needed anything. This made the others laugh heartily, but their laughter disturbed her not a whit. Sometimes she talked to herself; she seems to live in a state of amiable imbecility. Every now and then she went into the kitchen, where her husband was sitting morosely by the hearth, and spoke to him soothingly, as it seemed to me, giving him cigarettes which we had bestowed on her. Finally, just like a child, she brought in boxes full of post cards, letters, and holy pictures for us to look at. How astonished I was to find among them a piece of paper with the sketch of that design painted on the

gate ! In this first draft of the original composition the imaginative power of the decorative detail struck me more forcibly than ever ; I could not refrain from trying to copy it on one of my report-sheets. Of course, as is usual in such cases, it turned into something quite different. I succeeded fairly well in putting a stately Transylvanian house behind it, but on the gate itself the serpent had bitten the flame from the candle and was carrying it off between its jaws. Beneath it I set down a sentence of Glavina's : " Wrest the light from the jaws of the serpent ! " My comrades laughed : they thought the cider had quite gone to my head ; the housewife smiled at my scribble and asked by gestures if she could have it, then she took it to show to her husband.

22nd October.

By five o'clock we were ready to start. The housewife broke some twigs off a dried bunch of herbs hanging from the

kitchen rafters and handed them to me with a significant look as I took my leave. Presumably she meant them for a talisman ; their scent is something between thyme and rosemary. As I mounted my horse she made me a long and earnest speech ; if I understood her aright she was inviting me to come back after the war was over and pay her another visit in the newly reconstructed house. The Major, who had been feverish and groaning nine hours earlier, was now sitting firmly on his black horse, driving officers and men into a frenzy again. " What on earth have you given him ? " yelled Lieutenant F. I said that I didn't mind my medicaments being given the credit ; but that the old man knew very well that lots of people were anxious to see the last of him, and it must have had a powerful effect on him.

The day dragged out in wearisome marches. Our route lay over bare and wooded hills, with the same dull blue

houses appearing through the uniform grey of the soft rainy atmosphere. The soldiers, still dazzled by yesterday's gaiety, were gloomily sensible of their homeless state, their meagre rations, their torn boots, and uncertain destination; the blame for all of which they laid on the Major who had affronted them by his recovery. They shouted abuse at him when he rode past; he pretended not to hear, but took his revenge by delaying the next halt so long that I finally made the Adjutant appeal to him.

In Székely-Udvarhely several buildings were razed to the ground, and the air still reeked of burning. But over the hills were scattered, at short intervals, shining sewing-machines of good German manufacture, some in the mud of the road and some on the ploughed fields. The fleeing enemy must have been unwilling to leave such valuable booty behind.

In the evening many of the men

complained of utter exhaustion. Perhaps the typhus vaccine was still affecting them. I myself felt little the worse of it, although I had done the journey on foot, laden with baggage, to spare my drooping horse. The moderation in diet which I have prescribed for myself since Beuvraignes seems to be doing me good; I am also more alive than formerly—perhaps owing to Glavina's ministrations—and look upon this campaign simply as a great adventure. I gain a lot from this attitude; my compulsory service sits more lightly on me and lets me have an inkling of what voluntary service must be, for which perhaps it is a preparation. Among the usual sovereign remedies for exhaustion I admit that tea and coffee are beneficial—tobacco, brandy, and other grossly deceptive comforters being ruled out altogether; but commend me for choice to the lightest and most spiritual of stimulants. How few there are who know the immeasurable and inexhaustible

power of the living word ! That there are verses to be found in our poets, verses sprung from the heart and charged with the force of whole generations, analogous to radio-active elements but much more wonderful in that they still draw into themselves the forces of the world and give out streams of refreshment long after their creators have perished—who knows this ? In many of them there is power enough to start the wheel of life running again even for the weariest, and perhaps for their sake alone it is worth while to have lived face to face with death, for that is when they ring out at their clearest and strongest. And if the soul is flying free, what need of stimulants for the body ? Bread, fruit, a handful of water from a spring in the rocks and a sniff of wild mint are refreshment enough.

It was far into the night when we arrived here. I have forgotten the name of the village. The houses are overflowing with infantry ; we have only just found

accommodation in a looted and deserted cottage with a little hay in it. The others have already lain down in their wet clothes and blankets ; my candle-end is flickering, and I must make haste to secure myself a sleeping-place.

"The world, rough, raw, and monstrous as it is—I live in it as in a thin and gaudily iridescent soap bubble, holding my breath to keep from bursting it," I read in Glavina.

OTTELVE,

24th October, 1916.

Until noon we climbed through wind-driven clouds of mist over wooded hills. After one o'clock the valley of Csik Szereda opened out beneath us, and we descended into it. The air was still and warm.

There is a girdle of new graves around this town. Many of its buildings are plundered and destroyed ; the iron shop-shutters are pierced in many places by

hand-grenades. The Roumanians blew up the bridge over the Aluta, and now a corps of Prussian sappers has put up a temporary bridge in a few hours, a bold and almost graceful structure.

Before reaching Ottelve we marched a long time without a halt. The Transylvanian-Roumanian frontier had just come into sight when from one of the foremost platoons resounded a loud "Halt!" which was passed on to the rear. The various sections wavered, some tried to stop, and others to go on. Soon it appeared that neither the Major nor Lieutenant Leverenz, who were both riding on ahead, had given the order. Some man or other must have called it out, and a second had passed it on. The march was resumed. When we camped not long after in a meadow, Leverenz forbade his company to remove their haversacks, paraded them in full kit, and announced that he would keep them standing there until the man responsible

for the insubordination reported himself. Muttered curses could be heard, but nobody dared to disobey; some who had slipped off their haversacks even put them on again, unwillingly but smartly. Leverenz mounted a slight elevation in front of his men and repeated his statement. He assumed, he said, that nearly everybody disapproved of the rebel; and if he were too much of a coward to step forward someone else must report him instead. If that were done before the halt was up, the guilty man would be punished and the affair would be closed, but if not, the whole company, including the platoon leaders, would have to pay the penalty. There was now no more grumbling; all the ranks were still; and soldiers from the other companies clustered a little way off, curious to see how it would turn out. It was an anxious moment. There stood one of the best officers in the Division, blood-brother in race and stock to most of his subordinates,

famed for his fearlessness and consideration, honoured as an officer who never got his men into difficulties merely to gratify his ambition, prematurely aged by war and covered with scars, now white with rage at the shame which had been put upon him, his piercing round eyes turned in a little like an owl's as he fixed one man after another with his gaze, obviously determined to push the matter to the uttermost, but wise enough to try to settle it first as from man to man—and facing him the weary rank and file, horrified at themselves yet feeling dully that they had a justification but that it would vanish into thin air if they tried to put it into words, and silently perhaps, respecting the attitude of their commander —where did I once read that owl-like men are a match for anybody?

A dispassionate survey of the situation could diagnose it as an acute outbreak of an evil which has been lurking among us for some time. The war is dragging on

into the third year ; the soldier, usually without any vocation for his task, scantily fed, insufficiently clothed and shod, granted leave of absence only rarely, and then discouraged by the discouragement at home, loses his nervous energy and his discipline. The officers know it, and, the younger ones especially, let many things pass out of embarrassment, ignoring offensive remarks, persuading themselves that these are not maliciously intended and that everything will be all right when the enemy is sighted. This lax and ambiguous behaviour is bound to appear undignified and unworthy to a man like Leverenz with the real soldier's temperament, and now that he is applying the full weight of his authority to bring order within his own jurisdiction at least, one is bound to sympathise with him as with a doctor who risks a touch-and-go operation.

The Major, meanwhile, sat on one side, turning over a notebook with a show of indifference, and it was certainly his

better angel which prompted him not to interfere for the present.

The situation had become literally unbearable when the tension was relieved from an unexpected quarter. Private Kristl stepped forward with small quick paces and announced clearly and tersely that he was the man. Everybody stood stock-still for a moment, then a faint ripple of relief ran through the harassed company. To me this self-accusation of Kristl's was not above suspicion, for he had not been in the van at all, but in the middle of the column ; there he stood, however, in his faded old coat, raising his thin fair eyebrows and blinking at Leverenz as if he could not meet his eye, a convincing picture of guilt. The faintest flicker of a smile crossed the Lieutenant's serious face, a curious phenomenon, as if a stone god had suddenly come to life for a second. Perhaps the idea had occurred to him also that Kristl had accused himself in the hope of being sent home

again, and he had a fleeting sympathy for the man who was such an obvious bungler ; probably, too, he was secretly thankful that the screw did not have to be tightened any further—in any case, he faced the situation squarely, accepted the man's statement without question, and announced that all his leave would be stopped for a year, but that the sentence might be remitted if he showed conspicuous bravery in the face of the enemy. Somebody laughed at that, but nobody joined in. The company was instantly dismissed. Kristl stood where he was for some time with an uncertain air, almost as if he were disappointed.

Under a thundery sky, shot through by a delicate, caressing lilac light, we moved off an hour later towards Ottelve. We suddenly felt more strongly knitted together in brotherhood than we had done for a long time. The experiences we had shared for so many months, the breaking up of camps, the night-marches, battles,

rage, and the fear of death—with a kind of horror we realised that these had become part and parcel of our inner selves, that they could no longer be discarded without real loss. Kristl, as the only man among so many sufferers who has dared a positive action, has acquired immense prestige. Nobody asks whether he was really guilty or not, but everybody brings him an offering of some kind, cigarettes, chocolate, or nuts. Even men from the other companies salute him amiably as an extraordinary person, and swell the chorus of his praises.

Koczmás,

25th October, 1916.

We had been moving in a fog the whole day so that a kind of blindness fell upon our eyes. When we were marching into Koczmás about four o'clock I experienced a confusion of my outer and inner vision which I can describe quite objectively because during it I myself remained a

disinterested spectator. I had halted to attend to a man with sore feet, and eventually found myself quite alone on the road. The direction in which my quarters lay had been indicated to me, so I made for them by a short cut. I stopped once to take my bearings and heard a rushing sound quite near, exactly like the sound of the brook in front of my mother's house in S. ; and immediately I recognised the road, the fence, and the trees looming in the mist. Every stick and stone was familiar to me, and I could already hear the loud roaring of the Danube. A house that dimly emerged from the fog took on in every detail the aspect of my mother's little house. This pleasant delusion lasted for barely a quarter of a minute. I followed the babbling of the brook which suddenly died away and left me standing before the house door, and as I read my own name which the billeting officer had scrawled on it in chalk the whole vision

faded. An old woman came out and led me into a little room I was to share with Lieutenant T. Later she brought us a queer kind of milk pudding covered with a thick crust of sugar and cinnamon, and some ewe's milk cheese which was very sour, and, as far as I was concerned, uneatable. I have excused myself from the Staff mess-room and am taking my supper with T., helping him again with the censoring of the letters. The old woman appears from time to time and stands in the doorway with folded arms staring at us unwinkingly. She has a worried look and an abstracted eye, and thinking of the other woman in Szentlélek I cannot help wondering whether there are not more distraught and half-witted people in this country than elsewhere. Now and then her robust, fair-haired daughter comes and scolds the old woman for her persistent intrusion, leading her away every time like an incorrigible child.

26th October. On the march.

When the sky is clear one's dreams of the night before vanish quickly; in dull weather they keep hanging about. I had left little Wilhelm in front of a tower gateway, bidding him wait for me. I climbed up the twisting stairs. The roughly tiled wall had openings which seemed to lead far into catacombs of darkness. I could discern tall, narrow silver cradles, in each of which, as small as a doll, lay a dead French or German soldier with wide-open glassy eyes; single laurel leaves like tiny wings were lying over their brows and hair among trickles of blood. I climbed further and suddenly found myself facing the handsome young wolf we used to feed in the zoo at Hellabrunn; his right forepaw was caught between two steps and he looked at me expectantly. A touch was enough to set him free, and limping a little he went on carefully ahead of me. Then I noticed that, from the shoulders down, his hide

was really plumage, having broad grey feathers eyed with silver ending in a peacock's tail. I looked up, and there was the moon flying behind clouds; a wind whistled round me, and I was standing on a wide heath. Three female figures shrouded in white were sleeping beneath the ice-bound trees. The nearest one was Vally; behind her, larger and more indefinite, lay my mother and my sister. I bent over them and saw that their white blankets were of snow-flakes woven together like feathers. The wolf circled round the three women and sniffed at them. They started up with distorted faces; none of them recognised me. "The wolf will eat you up if you sleep on the heath!" I cried. They smiled at each other in embarrassment. "Get into the tower! There are silver cradles there," I added. I wanted to say it kindly and encouragingly, but it came out sharp and menacing. They did not recognise me and were afraid. Shivering

with cold, Vally drew the snow blanket over her and called to the wolf in a low voice. He lay down at the sleepers' feet, spread his peacock tail and covered them all with his enormous grey and silver shimmering feathers. Then I heard my little son call out loud and clear from the depths beneath : " Father, are you at the top ? " and I awoke.

In the evening the mists drew off and gathered in bright, deeply indented clouds. The mountains have retreated again. Through my field-glasses I can see a small dazzling white town ; it must be Kézdi-Vásârhely.

ESZTELNEK,

30th October, 1916.

After several days we seem to be getting a great deal to do ; forced marches and field manœuvres have brought us to-day as far as Esztelnek, whose white campanile stands by itself a little apart from the church. When my hostess for to-night

greeted me in the courtyard I was thunderstruck by her almost uncanny resemblance in face and gesture to the late Mother Superior Nikola. So even our shapes find no surcease, and down the generations the same kind of soul looks out on the world through the same kind of eyes. True, Mother Nikola never left her nunnery her whole life long, and this woman is a mother ; but she is as serious and austere as if she were subject to the rule of an Order, and all her activities follow the rhythm of a spiritual discipline. She apologised humbly for understanding little German, and took me into a room so bright and bare that my first impression was confirmed. She brought me white bread and apples, then went away ; but she soon returned with the photographs of her husband and her two sons. She folded her hands together and laid her cheek upon them in imitation of a sleeper, then she pointed to the ground, said " In Galicia," and went away again.

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The photographs she left beside the bread and fruit, perhaps desiring that in sharing the gifts of the house I should also remember its dead.

The afternoon was spent on duty. Our ultimate destination is still unknown. The promised batch of new boots has not arrived, and it will be on worn-out soles that our battalion goes into the mountain warfare. There is no news from home. In the evening, urged, perhaps, by my dream of the tower, I climbed the campanile. When dusk obliterates the landmarks between one man's property and another's, leaving nothing discernible but the dusty white branching roads which belong to all and to none, one is glad to let one's personal desires sink too into oblivion.

ESZTELNEK,

31*st October*.

We marched off about five o'clock. It blew sharp from the north-east. I was soon chilled riding, and decided to go

on foot. Dark green winter crops extended to the very foot of the mountains which we were rapidly approaching. Banks of grey cloud lay over the mountain-tops ; gradually they flushed with red, then suddenly blazed into fire. Yet the sun did not rise after all where the blaze was reddest, but a little to the left, in a uniformly bright cloud. We were already in sight of the tower of Bereczk when an orderly came flying after us and handed a note to the Major ; we had to halt at once, and a few minutes later came the order to return to our old quarters. The companies gave loud cheers of joy. I was perhaps the only one who regretted the set-back. For the postponement of a decision that has been taken leaves an uncanny impression on the forward-striving spirit, as if the direct march of destiny were thwarted. By ten o'clock we were in Esztelnek again, where the villagers who had yesterday received us so kindly looked at us with bewilderment and

reserve. Our return struck them as suspicious, as the herald of a German retreat; in their minds they saw us already fleeing across the Maros. My good hostess, however, welcomed me with unfeigned delight; she seemed to have expected me. Someone had pointed out the medical symbols on my collar as I went away, and now she wanted to make up for lost opportunities. She led me upstairs into a room where holy pictures in the Russian style were hanging on the walls and empty Easter eggs beautifully decorated were stuck on little nails along the roof-beams. In a bed with a bright red coverlet drawn up to the window lay a girl of scarcely sixteen years, racked with consumption. The mother completely lost her composure and poured out a torrent of words. In vain I tried to explain that I did not understand one of them; she only nodded enthusiastically as if I had just said what she most wanted to hear. And what need

was there of words? She was asking for help, and that was easy to understand. The child was beautiful, with her damp black hair combed high above her gleaming forehead, and eyes in which the whole of her contracted life burnt as a flame burns in pure oxygen. Her body was terribly emaciated; only her breasts were full and firm, sublimely defying death.

As I examined her I became once more aware how much a continued military life affects one's character. What used for years to be part of my daily round, the exploration of bodily organs for indications of disease, no longer seems to me so easy and positive a business. Indeed, it appeared to me now a gross and fallacious artifice, a kind of white magic that made neither for good living nor good dying. I believe that in the future many medical men will have quite a different attitude to their patients. Perhaps one has to submit to a certain kind of rigid discipline to fit oneself for

the understanding and healing of other people's deepest perplexities, and perhaps too one should refuse many cases for the sake of more certainly curing a few. My medical services on this occasion were little more than a pretence; but after the examination, when I made signs that I would fetch medicaments from the ambulance waggon, both mother and daughter were satisfied and comforted for the time being. The woman brought in a dish of plums, offered some to me and to the invalid, and ate a few herself. We sat together in silence, they ignorant of my tongue and I of theirs. A hot afternoon sun streamed in and gave a red glow to the brown paprika pods which were hanging in a bunch at the window like little horns. Wasps buzzed, and a low muttering of thunder came from the mountains. The mother said not a word, but when she wanted me to eat she touched my chin lightly with her hand and pointed to the fruit. I soon got up

and took my leave. To me the scene seemed magnified into an eternal farewell to all dull suffering and disease. And it was curious ; I suddenly saw the obscure kingdom of the microbes no longer as a foul and disgusting source of decay, but rather as a terrible and sacred force bound in alliance with the most powerful energies of Nature. It can hardly be our task to wage war on this force. Other forces are already becoming dimly perceptible, which we must either oppose or conciliate.

" There are dormant poisons which do not harm the blood while the poisoned subject is kept in darkness, yet brought into the light begin at once to ferment and to slay." How clear this obscure saying is slowly becoming to me !

Before supper I slept for half an hour. I dreamed of my horse. The moment I tried to mount him he changed into a naked young woman.

The Adjutant has reported that we

advance again to-morrow morning, and has assured me that there will be no turning back this time.

Bakó tetö,

1st November, 1916.

We left Esztelnek about the same time as yesterday and under an overcast sky got as far as the large village of Bereczk. There were many people in the streets, mostly women. A neat little matron, bent with age, trotted along beside our column, peering eagerly at one man's head after another's; it was the steel helmets, donned by order the day before, which attracted her. Finally, when our march slowed down somewhat, she summoned all her courage, darted up to the smallest file-leader, and tapped the brim of his helmet with a sharp finger. Perhaps she had been wondering whether it was wood or pasteboard; at any rate, when she discovered that it was metal she folded her arms contentedly and dropped behind.

A very old man was standing in front of his little house, swinging his hat and crying incessantly in a weird monotone : " God help the Germans ! God help the Germans ! "

Our regimental baggage was left behind in the village ; the paymaster and the officers of the commissariat took leave of us and wished us luck. We climbed on into the mountains through a light drizzle. We could see distant crags with black ravines like gullets inhaling and exhaling vapours. About nine o'clock we halted on the spur called Madjaros, and here we parted company with our grooms and horses. The field-kitchens heated our rations in a marshy clearing, and we had a long rest, much needed after five hours' marching, and with steep precipices still to come. After the meal I went on ahead and sat down on a stone to wait till the others overtook me. The air darkened ; mists were sweeping down from above ; and while I was watching them a stray

tongue of mist licked round me and I was swallowed up. It is a strange experience to be stalked and seized by an airy cloud as by a beast of prey. One's home life revives in shining pictures, and at the same time one is irradiated by a boundless confidence in the rushing, subterranean forces of the world. As if from an immeasurable distance I heard the battalion breaking up camp, and I did not move until the first sections stumbled upon me.

Our road was now continuously uphill. The Adjutant said it was only about ten miles to the trenches, but we heard no firing. The pine trees became sparser, and juniper, rich with violet-green berries, grew luxuriantly among the crags. We came on rows of graves which from the inscriptions could only have been five days old. Carp, a Roumanian lieutenant, was the name on one of the wooden crosses. Towards two o'clock we traversed a bare hollow streaked with mist, and

saw a terrible and bewildering spectacle. Where a solitary house in the middle had been burned down, the embers were still smoking. The blackened walls were still standing, and one could see that they had been of the usual blue ; but nothing was left of the roof save its charred ribs. Behind a wooden shed untouched by the fire lay two graves without crosses but decked with juniper ; and a tall, very old woman, naked to the waist, with Magyar features, her grey hair wild and filthy, glided round and round the two hummocks talking confidentially to an invisible something. As we came nearer she drew herself up and made a forbidding gesture with her hand as if to warn us from the place ; then she suddenly turned away and wrung her hands towards the east with a piercing wail. Trusting to his smattering of Hungarian, Lieutenant F. tried to speak to her, but she bent down, gathered a handful of earth from the nearest grave and flung it at him, more as

an exorcism and a warning than as a hostile act. Half in vexation, half in horror, Lieutenant F. started back, and returned to the column. None of the other officers or men halted. They did indeed wonder aloud what could have happened to the old woman ; but most of them felt that here a tragedy had taken place which no facile sympathy could alleviate, and went on marching silently into the mists which soon blotted out the terrible grandeur of the scene.

When we climbed up to the top of Bakó tetö about half-past three, we emerged out of the world of vapours into clear sunshine. A mossy plateau covered with silver thistles with a wooded peak on either side was chosen as our camping-ground, and enormous heaps of rusty tins showed that other troops had been there before us. Like most of the others, I rolled myself in my blanket and lay down, steaming with sweat as I was, upon the frozen ground, where I fell asleep at once

and woke after half an hour greatly refreshed although shivering a little.

Out of the wood above us came a man in a long green cloak holding on to his head, which was bound up in cloths as thick as a turban. It was a wounded Roumanian who was finding his way alone into captivity. When we came near we could see that his bloodsoaked bandages were displaced, and that a gaping wound in his throat was half visible. His right eye was black and swollen, his unhurt eye was a clear light brown. He recognised R. and me as medical officers and stopped before us, pointing silently to his wound. We did not dare to probe it, nor did we take off the old bandage, but laid a new one closely and firmly over it ; whereupon the wretched man staggered further on his way of agony followed by the grim laughter of our infantrymen, who, perhaps, without being conscious of it, were jeering at themselves in the humiliated person of their foe ; to-day to

thee—to-morrow to me! We did not march any further, for the order had come to bivouac where we were. The rifles have been piled, the helmets hung up on them, and the tents pitched. Allied troops are pouring over the mountain, and scraps of unknown languages go past us on the wind. The pale green moon, small as a slip of grass, curves across the sky, and the stars have begun to blaze out. The companies have kindled fires round which everybody is congregating. Some Austrian officers have come to warm themselves for a while. One of them had encountered the old woman beside the graves and tried in vain to console her. He had also peeped into the wooden shed, and says there were plenty of clothes, sheepskins, coloured blankets, and foodstuffs in it. He had fetched out a cloak and laid it round the poor madwoman's bare shoulders, but she let it slip to the ground again. The house, he says, was a frontier post, and

the Roumanians in their advance killed the father and son who were frontier guards ; further questioning, however, elicits that this is mere supposition. I am almost glad that the conversation has returned to its ordinary level. What is done is done. And sorrow so great that it hardens a human being to the point where there is neither hunger any more, nor cold, nor tears ; sorrow which forces one to reject in a sacred frenzy all comfort and charity ; this last holy mystery of the human soul which is akin to the greatest genius—shall it be made a subject for tittle-tattle ? Is it to be turned into a story to make the flesh creep and satisfy the morbid curiosity of sensation-hunters ?

The night is growing cold. One man after another admits that he is not really equipped for a winter campaign in the mountains. Not one feels inclined to crawl under the thin tents. I shall wander from fire to fire, paying visits, until sleep overcomes me.

2nd November.

I woke up with the feeling that my toes were dead, quitted the tent, and went stamping round the camp. Later some soldiers came up to me with genuinely frost-bitten toes and ears. My circulation was soon set a-going by talking, movement, and hot coffee, which had only rather too big an admixture of juniper needles. But the sun soon rose behind the Roumanian mountains and afforded us to-day a marvellous example of how the atmosphere round the earth distorts light ; for during several minutes it appeared over the black forests not as a segment of a circle but as an enormous carmine-red egg, until in its slow ascent it regained its normal shape and brightness. Beneath us, however, is spread a limitless sea of white smooth thick down broken by island peaks, which stretches without a shore to the west where it ends in a streak of blue and purple. On the edge nearest to us, where it is shallow,

one can discern rocks and trees below the surface, which look almost as if mirrored in it.

The march, which began about nine o'clock, was frequently interrupted by halts ; apparently we had to avoid a too early arrival. The midday pause was spent near the summit of the mountain Kishavas, on a mossy level of rocks and juniper bushes covered with recent graves. Some of the crosses were carefully wreathed with green ; but often there was only a small shoot hastily bound with creepers to a larger one in fleeting remembrance. There was a post set between two stones with a crescent cut on it and the inscription : Brica Hamid, 29 x 16. The sun's radiation was strong in the cold wind ; exhalations rose from the ripe berries on the tips of the juniper shoots ; and from hour to hour the men's faces grew browner. It was very quiet and nobody wanted to speak ; our minds were still preoccupied by that unending sea of white.

A Hungarian observation officer joined us and finally invited H. and me to have tea with him in his post, where he let us look through his extending telescope. As one hunts in the range of a microscope for the red or blue dyed growths of deadly bacteria, so here one searched for the moss-green uniforms of Roumanian soldiers. The officer had his telescope trained on the height of Lespédii, and let slip the information that our battalion would have to storm it, and fairly soon, too. He was vexed because none of the green soldiers would show themselves ; he would have been overjoyed to send a couple of shells among them. I saw in the glass a small stony hill with a few woods on it and a great deal of bush. Turning a little screw, I suddenly discovered behind a juniper thicket a whole band of Roumanians digging themselves in ; my first impulse was to tell the officer, but then I felt discouraged and said nothing. For the first time I was

faced with the duty of dealing out death, since an enemy, if spared, may presently imperil one's own comrades. But, on the other hand, those toiling men were literally given into my hand by that little glass ; I could see one of them in the act of filling his pipe, another taking a drink from a field-flask ; they felt completely secure, and as long as I did not betray them their security was real—a strange predicament for a man who is no soldier and lives in standing peace with himself. My heart began to beat violently, but an elderly Bosnian captain who had returned from leave the night before suddenly came up and broke into a lively conversation which attracted everybody's attention, and the magic glass was completely forgotten. He averred that the Residence in Vienna was besieged night and day by crowds of starving people imploring the old Emperor to make a move for peace.

When we went back to camp we saw a

caravan of pack-mules rising out of the shining cloud; the drivers said that down below in the valley it was a gloomy day. About three o'clock, climbing up through thick forest, we moved off to our positions, and took them over from Bosnian infantry. A hut of moss and brushwood was assigned as my head-quarters; I left my baggage there and went to see how the companies were posted. The Roumanians are quite quiet, but it will be difficult for them not to perceive that a new brand of enemy has taken over the wood. For while the gallant but easygoing Bosnians preferred the constant risk of death by day and freezing by night to the labour of digging and fitting up trenches, a thorough German trench is now being made with resounding shouts and singing, and there is such a felling of trees, and a sawing and hammering, that one might think we were in our own country and had to build houses for our children and our children's children.

4th November.

The couch of pine needles which Rehm heaped up and covered with a tent-sheet proved excellent, and we all slept till far into the morning. The Roumanians are still quiet. Our men are making dug-outs. There is a rumour, however, that we are not to stay long here.

When the Major scooped into the jam-tin at breakfast he brought out a small dead mouse on his spoon. Who can tell how it had got there? There are plenty of mice here, prétty brown creatures with eyes like black beads; I saw one in the brushwood roof looking at me to-day when I woke up. Klingensteiner was called in and requested to explain, but all he could say was that the pot had probably been left uncovered overnight. He was severely reprimanded, and bore it in silence; finally he timidly offered to bring us a new tin. The Major wavered, but only for a moment; then he rejected the offer, ordered the mouse's removal,

and his eyes almost starting from his head with revulsion began to spread the jam on his bread and pushed the tin over to us. Seeing us shudder he spread the jam thicker than ever and declared curtly and brusquely that the mouse could not have fallen in until last night, so there was no question of putrefaction ; and that in the towns at home where hunger was rampant a thousand German mothers would think themselves lucky if they could get such jam to spread on their children's wretched husks. With that he chewed and swallowed mightily, his face distorted with boundless disgust. At last he got up, spread himself a second slice, and went off without waiting to see if we followed his example. Some of us began to laugh, and one man called him a swine, but we were all in some degree visibly disconcerted. At last somebody remarked that he could very well have left the jam alone and put up with dry bread ; but the remark fell flat, for everybody realised

that the old man had consciously tried to endure his disgust, and to let us see it; in fact, that he had deliberately tried to annoy and shame us. Privately, too, we admitted to ourselves that a nation whose members all thought and acted like that would be always unconquerable; yet we were inclined to resent the fact that this little old martinet who was half a joke and half a trial to us should suddenly display something like real greatness of feeling. For every one believes in his own capacity for new spiritual growth, but likes to think that other people, especially those getting on in years, are rigidly fixed; and one is almost indignant when the contrary is proved. Soon we all fell silent and sat thoughtfully round the jam-tin, ready to eat out of it if needs must, but embarrassed by each other's presence.

. . . . .

In the afternoon I accompanied the orderly officer through the whole of our

front lines. This region seems quite desolate; now and then there is a rustling among the leaves and a bush is shaken, but not a bird or animal is to be seen. The forest is primeval forest; a curtain of closely woven creepers hangs from tree-top to tree-top and shuts out the light. Enormous trunks half rotten, some bent like melting candles, lie piled in confusion glowing with all the reds and browns of decay, and mosses, lichens, and fungi are struggling into the light everywhere. All those shapes which Nature slowly creates and develops on higher planes and in nobler and more permanent forms, to become at last creatures with eyes or wings, have been designed here through dreaming æons in the most perishable stuff, and dissolve in unstable ardour almost as soon as born. The ground is covered with fungi like partridges' wings; there are others resembling black mussel-shells with amethystine tendrils; whole tracts are bedecked with

violet trumpets ; white arms rise out of frilled ruffles, and tiny misshapen hands of light green with clear red spots instead of finger-tips are thrust out of decaying bark.

Suddenly we came upon a dead man, and as if the sight had unsealed our eyes we became aware that the forest was full of corpses. All round the height of Lespédii they are lying in tumbled rows, mostly Roumanians, for presumably the Austrians have been already buried. They wear caps with a double peak which only need a little yellow button in front to be like old German fools' caps. They are all in new uniforms and have new shoes cut out of a single piece of leather and laced to the foot by a strong green thong drawn through holes. One can see by their equipment that their commanders reckoned on a quick and certain victory.

We visited all our companies, and were joined later by 2nd Lieutenant K. who came out to the front for the first time

only a week ago. The three of us made a wide detour, and the orderly officer gave us a very vivid description of the position at the Oitóz pass. The Lieutenant is a delicate youngster who would never have got into the army in other times, with a face so pale that he looks like a recent invalid. The sight of so many dead men seemed to affect him; he asked when they would be buried; the orderly officer assured him that there was no hurry, since the frost kept the bodies in a good state of preservation, and for the moment there were more important things to do. We stopped in a little clearing and studied the height of Lespédii which the battalion is to storm in the next few days. It looked even more insignificant to the naked eye than through the telescope; its yellow rock and brown brushwood looked like the mangy fell of some dappled beast; and Lieutenant K. expressed my own feelings when he asked if there were any tactical advantage to be

gained in sacrificing German lives for the sake of such a miserable heap of stones, and why not let the Roumanians keep it, in God's name? The orderly officer looked at his young comrade in pained surprise, as if he were breaking the rules of a game, and explained that our object was not merely to capture a rock or two but to check and wear down the enemy's forces and thus relieve more important German fronts; besides, it was high time our men launched an attack, for a long defensive sapped their courage; even the best soldiers deteriorated without the stimulus of fighting.

The Lieutenant was silent for a long time; but when we began to turn back he asked abruptly if there was any confirmation of the peace rumours which were flying about. We answered in the negative. Then he burst out into a hysterical tirade, which grew more and more confused, until at length, laughing but still extremely agitated, he told us of

an aunt he had in Augsburg who swore that it was the neighbouring red planet Mars that was responsible for this war ; that he was to be dominant over the earth for seven years and prevail upon human souls to drive each other out from the warm house of life. The orderly officer had relapsed more and more into monosyllables, and to this last revelation he made no reply at all. I think he was right. In the presence of the dead every word that does not ring true and solid vanishes as if in a vacuum. Of course, there is not a single man who does not feel a force within himself which is allied to the planets and transcends them ; but let us be vigilant in our own sphere ! If from his own centre a man perceives what is most immediate and most necessary to him and fulfils it, how can a wandering body in the skies be against him ? He has allied himself to the force behind all the suns and is a participator in the eternal game.

As we came back through the upper part of the forest we could see between the dark frame of the pines the sky inlaid with red and gold on blue, but beneath us lay the great white sea of vapour, already shrouded in dusk, with a few single lights gleaming on its eastern edge. While we were still wondering if these were in our zone or in the enemy's, we noticed before us on the ground a very curious thing, a small dark creature running incessantly round a tree in narrow circles like a clockwork mouse. Its movements reminded me of the white Japanese dancing mice which always delighted Wilhelm so much in Hellabrunn; but it was bigger and nearly black. We advanced cautiously towards it, whereupon it darted up the trunk and disappeared. In the dug-out I discovered that a brigade order had come attaching me to the regimental staff to organise a dressing station during the attack. That means exchanging the danger and

low-lying dampness of the dead men's wood for the safety and dry golden air of the heights. Everybody congratulates me. But I would rather stay with the battalion.

On the 6th of November I climbed with Rehm, Dehm, and Raab up to the summit of Kishavas, reported my arrival to the Colonel and took charge at once of one wounded man. He had been shot in the left side while reconnoitring, and the bullet was still in his lung. Heedless of death, which already shines with subtle brilliance in his darkening eyes, he persists in asking for brandy, hoping by means of it to master his weakness and rise to shoot down innumerable Roumanians. I never saw such a passion for vengeance in the midst of such suffering.

At supper I discussed with the Colonel the site and nature of the hut which has to be constructed for me. We agreed on

a sheltered site at the edge of the forest. I asked him to let me have men to help in building it, but even before he could answer me the most reassuring promises poured in from all sides, the Adjutant, the chaplain, and the orderly officer all surpassing each other in offers of service ; every one of them was to send me his own man early next morning.

7th November.

The nights here are colder than down below. We have dug a deep broad hole and covered it with a tent-sheet, which gives us some warmth. It would be a still better shelter without the countless juniper roots which sometimes prod one in the ribs when one turns over in one's sleep. But it is pleasant to lie awake for once when the moon is shining over one's premature grave, and the delicate shadows of grasses and bushes go flitting across the tent-sheet. To-day I could not get Glavina out of my mind ; he must be breath-

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ing at the bottom of that misty sea where the moon penetrates only as a pale silvery radiance. I would like to read one of his sentences again, or to speak with him ; but he is inaccessibly shy, and his letters no longer go through my hands. Often I feel that his thoughts transport me lightly and powerfully into the future. Matters have been so arranged, however, that he is no longer on trench duty, but is employed almost exclusively as a dispatch rider.

8th November.

The weather is still good ; every morning brings clouds, and is like a grey larva out of which the day flies up blue into the air.

The building of my hut did not proceed quite as I had expected yesterday ; still, it is built—what more can a man want ? A regimental staff is just like a little court ; it is the epaulettes which win consideration and not the man. As I

have no such grandeurs the assurances of help I received yesterday vanished like smoke this morning ; perhaps they were made to please the Colonel rather than me. When the servants did not turn up I presumed to remind the gentlemen of their promises ; but it appeared that they were all extremely busy, and not one of them could spare his servant for the moment ; one after another they consoled me by engaging to send help later. I did not persist, but set to work at once with only Raab, Dehm, and Rehm. We did not make much headway, however, and had to procure other hands somehow ; so after ten, when I knew that the officers were strictly tied to official routine, I made up to the servants like a secret wooer and induced them with money and tobacco to come to our aid. They were all dexterous men and entered into the spirit of the thing at once. But I did not employ them all together, I kept two of them always free to attend to any demand

of their masters. The building grew like a mushroom; by midday the walls, made of posts and sods of turf, were up, by one o'clock Dehm had put a roof over them composed of laths, brushwood, earth, and stones; soon bedsteads were built in one above the other and even a table and two chairs were fitted together out of birch boughs; then a stone fireplace was made with a chimney of interlapping tin cans with the bottoms cut out, which had been used for scooping out the floor. From time to time I had put in an appearance at head-quarters where everybody was busy planning the attack and discussing it on the telephone. Smiling to me over the apparatus, the orderly officer asked how my hut was getting on. I complained of the shortage of hands; he remarked politely with an absent-minded air that there was no hurry and it would be all right soon; he would send me his man the very next day. I began to appreciate my own joke. My

good fellows laboured as if they were building for eternity ; I remembered the farmer of Szentlélek, and wished him as much luck with his fine new farm-house as I had with my hut. After supper the Colonel asked whether any beginning had been made with my hut. My answer, that it was finished, provoked lively amazement all round the table. They all wanted to see it. I led them over to the forest, invited them in to sit on the chairs and bedsteads, and distributed cigarettes. Dehm, Rehm, and Raab, the architects, were summoned by the Colonel and congratulated. Nobody enquired whether any one else had helped in the building.

The evening is clear and ethereal like those which one imagines on more brilliant planets. The sunset has been glorious, and while the western sky is still bright with a reddish glow, behind the lavender-blue mountains of Roumania the moon is rising.

11th November.

At ten this morning, while the glaring sun was striking full in the enemy's face, a handful of our men from the Sixth and Seventh Companies made a bold sally and took Lespédii from the Roumanians. It is now four o'clock and the enemy has already launched the seventh counter-attack. Our men are loud in praise of their opponents' bravery, but find them lacking in caution and experience. Every time before they spring to the assault we can hear one of their commanders making a speech, then a wild march is blared out, and to its strains they come rushing on like madmen. Thus is music, that serene art, transformed into a drug which drives men past the bounds of reason and fills them with such overflowing life that they yearn to fling it away.

It is already obvious that this little heap of rocks is to cost us more than we bargained for; the transport of the wounded has come to an irremediable

standstill until to-morrow. I decided to apply for more stretcher-bearers, and managed to get the telephone from the reluctant Adjutant, but discovered that our Divisional M.O. with his whole staff had been transferred to another sector of the front. All the other German stations responded with vague excuses, and I already saw the wounded in my charge exposed to frost and hunger, and was in the act of quitting the telephone to ask for a personal interview with the Colonel, when a young Hungarian cadet leaning against a pine tree, a slim, slightly stooping figure with a clear high forehead and cool grey eyes that surveyed me sympathetically, saluted me courteously and said: "May I give you a piece of advice? If ever you are in need of anything apply to the Austrian Captain Gebert in Bereczk. He'll always help you out." The young man looked more like a quiet scholar than a soldier; perhaps that was why I felt such con-

fidence in him. And when I rang up the distant Captain he actually responded as heartily as a salesman who sees good business coming his way: "Why only six sections? I'd rather send you twelve! And do you have enough bandages?" I asked for a reasonable quantity, and he promised to send an ass laden with bandages and compresses on the heels of the stretcher-bearers. "It'll all be there by five in the morning," he added. Never did I hang up a telephone with a lighter heart. I turned round to thank my unexpected guardian-angel, but he had furnished a fresh proof of his identity by becoming invisible.

12th November, at 6 a.m.

As the dressing-station has been long crowded out we have been laying out new wounded in a nearby hollow, and have kindled a huge fire to warm the air. The dead are gathered on a mossy level, a little on the further side of the fire,

which the wind blows across to them as if to burn them up. The young Lieutenant who recently walked with us round the lines is among them. Shortly before midnight a report came in that the Roumanians had been withdrawn from the front and replaced by a Russian regiment.

After that it became quiet on the lower slopes, and after one o'clock no more wounded arrived. I lay down in my tent about two and fell asleep. Then I had a dream. I was with Vally and Wilhelm in our sitting-room at Passau, which looked very bleak and poverty-stricken. Nearly all the furniture was gone ; the walls full of cracks, and the mirror tarnished. Vally's face was thin and white ; she was lying on a wretched broken-down bed and said calmly, almost gaily, that she had had nothing to eat for a long time. Wilhelm was sitting at a little table writing on a slate. From time to time he laid his pencil down, took up

a watering-can, went to the window and watered some plants growing there in pots. "What are you doing?" I asked. "I must water the King-flowers," he replied with great seriousness, and went on writing. "Yes, these are precious plants," said Vally; "just look at them! The most of them wither, unfortunately, before they bloom, but the one in the middle, that big one, will certainly flower. and that's enough. It will bring us all we need, clothes and shoes, bread and wine."—"Clothes, shoes, bread, and wine," repeated my small son in a sing-sing voice, then stood up and began to water the flowers again. I looked at the plant in question; it showed only a large irregular pale green bud rising on a hairy red stalk, but if one kept on looking it really began to resemble a folded-up little figure with tiny yellow spikes like a crown. And suddenly I fell into the same mood as the other two, and felt wretchedly impoverished and full of mys-

terious hope. But at the same moment I remembered that I had bread and wine with me, genuine Tokay bought in Arad and fresh white bread from Esztelnek. Quickly I unpacked it and moved the table to the bed, and we all ate and drank, carefully avoiding the slightest caress or loving word, as if we knew deep down that we were only dream figures and would be destroyed by a touch or even by an excessive display of affection. Vally's cheeks became rosy, her eyes shone, and the little one grew very merry. "I'll give the flower a drink to make it grow quickly!" he cried, spilling a little wine in his palm and letting it drip on the bud. The bud shot up enormously, and the figure in it became much more definite—suddenly with a faint tinkle a tiny ray of purple-golden light streamed out from between its leaves, and the boy started back in alarm and delight. "The time has come!" cried Vally, raising herself from the

pillow; but I heard a rough voice calling me and woke up. Somebody had opened the tent; I saw the flush of dawn in the sky and a bright star twinkling above it; and on the ground was a doubled-up kneeling figure in Austrian uniform who was laboriously and respectfully trying to explain something to me in halting German. Raab came forward and said it was a Bosnian Red Cross sergeant, the leader of the band of stretcher-bearers who had just arrived, and that he had insisted on reporting to me at once and asking for orders. I retained one section for emergencies, and told the others off to rest and eat before beginning their heavy duties. They are sturdy men of middle age; they all have that sure elastic step which spares the patients so much agony. The little ass has come too, a jet-black animal with white rings round its eyes; it is still steaming with its pious labours. Everybody is gathering round to pet it

and give it pieces of bread; and like the peoples of old times we are nearly at the point of reverencing unconscious innocence as the highest manifestation of the divine.

Down below all is still quiet. A machine-gun sometimes pops like a gas-bubble in a marsh. The wounded are waiting patiently. A mild injection relieves their pain, and the enormous fire is warming the air far and wide, so that it shimmers like running glass. The Bosnians have set themselves in a ring round the fire, they are singing long-drawn-out songs in which trochaics preponderate. A violent wind tugs at the blue columns of flame and showers sparks and shreds of blazing juniper on the dead.

12th November: noon.

The cold is increasing. Sparse flakes of snow are floating in the air; one cannot tell where they are coming from, for only a few light clouds are overhead.

A troubled morning. The enemy has brought up artillery, and we are expecting a counter-attack. Austrian troops are crossing the mountain, stopping to rest from time to time. In the forest, a little off the track, I saw a Polish officer, a whey-faced young man, repeatedly beating an elderly Bosnian, who did not appear to understand his orders, over the head and shoulders with his clenched fists. Such scenes have been reported of late in the Allied Army. It is much too heterogeneous in its composition, and one race hates the other ; there are actually officers who neither speak nor understand the language of their men, and are too proud to learn it. But this particular outrage was lifted into the ridiculous and almost rendered innocuous by the attitude of its victim. Not relinquishing for a second his properly respectful bearing, he tolerated the blows with the indulgent superiority of a giant allowing a drunken gnome to punch and cuff him. A broad grin

struggled across his sly and honest peasant face ; it was difficult to distinguish who was giving the blows and who receiving them. Had the young officer not lost all control over himself he could not have failed to see the absurdity and futility of his action. It was an unendurable sight ; one had either to turn away or meditate an intervention. An audacious imp suddenly possessed me ; in a twinkling I had out my large silver-grey cloak and flung it round me ; then with a cigarette in my hand I went up to the furious man and coolly asked him for a light. The magic effect of my unauthorised collar was immediately evident ; the Lieutenant let his hands fall, assured me of his humble respects, and patiently ministered to me with his silver lighter which positively refused to burn, at the same time signing to the Bosnian to go away. The man departed upright and unbowed, his shoulders shaking with inward laughter. To the officer's credit be it said, however,

that he did not diminish his courtesy by a hair's breadth as it gradually dawned on him that my gorgeous apparel was a sham. Bewailing the long duration of the war and the sad state of his nerves, he accompanied me for a bit into the forest and had just promised me a cup of tea in his near-by shelter when a tremendous noise suddenly broke out down below and sent us both back to our duty at the double. In the Staff Room I learned that a Roumanian attack was in progress, but that it had been anticipated, and that further news was calmly awaited.

A quarter of an hour later the enemy was repulsed, and a few prisoners taken. The rumour that Russian troops have taken over the position has proved false.

In the evening.

The prisoners—one officer and twenty-one men—were paraded before departure on the open level beside the graves. One

can see that these Roumanians have bad consciences as far as we Germans are concerned; the officer, a second lieutenant, dropped his head when the Colonel stalked past in his patriarchal majesty. A Jew of about thirty, square built and full-bearded, drew our attention by speaking in German. "All of us," he said, "have been astonished to come on Germans here. We hate the Hungarians, yes; but we admire the Germans. They are the most important nation in the world; one can learn much from them, and they have never done us any harm." The man spoke in an excited, well-meaning tone; perhaps he was afraid, perhaps he had lived for some time in Germany. Nobody answered him. He was met everywhere with silence; he was not even asked the usual question which the French like to put to our men when they fall into their hands: "Why did you declare war on us?" At length he gave up talking.

13th November.

During the night the howling of wolves was heard from the surrounding mountains ; the mule-drivers say this means an approaching snow-storm. The Bosnians have taken over our lines again, and we left Kishavas about eight in the morning under an overcast sky, after the quartermasters had already preceded us at dawn to Lemhény. As we marched downhill I could not help thinking of the distraught old woman, but the Staff took another road, and I learned later that that path was avoided by all the troops because it was longer and more difficult. It might have been ten o'clock when the plains first came in sight with their ploughed fields and blue houses, only to vanish again immediately, until all at once, at the bottom of the angle between two dark blue slopes, the little campanile of Esztelnek gleamed out. We all recognised it and gave a cheer ; the columns poured downhill singing loudly, as if they had no

haversacks to weigh upon them. But we were overtaken by some Austrian Staff officers who came up post-haste shouting shrill orders; they called the Colonel over and spread maps out before him. A loud command to halt was raised, the orderlies had to mount their bicycles to bring the advance companies to a stop. The singing broke off; in the rain, which began to come down, the men waited mistrustfully. In a few minutes came the command to return again; we had to march back into the mountains under weeping rain-clouds. The Colonel informed us that important mountain positions had been lost, among them the frontier peak of Runcul Mare, which must be recaptured at once. In Oitóz we had a glimpse of Count Tisza who, in an elegant fur coat, a grey cap in his hand, was standing among a group of officers and watching a Szekler regiment file past. Our companies were quartered in huge wooden barracks. Taking leave

of the Colonel I hastily sought out the Major and reported myself for service again with my battalion. He was sitting alone on a broken chair in his wretched quarters studying maps. The damp, sunless slopes of Kishavas have revived his pains again ; he enquired at once if I had any powders with me. Luckily there was a small quantity left ; in my haversack I found as well a single remaining tablet of Vally's excellent chocolate. Munching it we sat together for half an hour in the draughty room without saying much. Even now he will not hear of going into hospital, and it would be little use trying to persuade him that with his fifty years he could be sitting at home without reproach instead of storming one icy mountain after another, with new enemies behind each, in a war where the enemy is invisible. I was surprised to find a secret but genuine inward pleasure at being with him again ; perhaps a smoker has the same feeling when he

inhales his sharp but fragrant weed after a long deprivation.

Meanwhile the men have been given an issue of Munich beer, and as they have heard that we have only to hold ourselves in readiness for the time being, and perhaps may not be sent into action after all, like children they are in good spirits again. Nobody wants to sleep; the noise and singing go on till midnight.

14th November.

At seven o'clock we went on again in rain and mist. Three men, suspected of typhus, had to be left behind in Oitóz. The louse, that disseminator of pestilence, till lately only ludicrous and disgusting, manifests itself gradually as a diabolical, inconquerable foe. For months it has tormented our bodies, so that often our skins seem to be inflamed at a thousand separate points; it scatters our thoughts and dreams; now it is trying to kill. On Kishavas I was struck by the fact that

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the patch on my shirt over which were pinned the sprays given me by the woman of Szentlélek remained almost free from lice. I concluded from this that the natural oils of certain plants must be still more inimical to the vermin than napthaline, the supply of which in any case is becoming scarcer and scarcer; and I plucked some wild mints which were growing there in abundant thick bluish-green clumps. Twice a day I rubbed my skin with the leaves and stalks, and I have taken a good supply with me as well. At first the itching and burning increased; but the final effect has so far been beneficial.

At one o'clock a rattle of firing rose quite near; bullets whistled over us. We called a halt at what had once been a customs-house, where a dressing-station for our regiment was already set in order. The third battalion was engaged in a battle with the Roumanians. Wounded lay about in all the rooms, and many

were lying outside as well in the rain, on the grass and mud. A priest, his face gleaming white, wandered among the dying, whispering words of comfort to them, sprinkling them with consecrated oil, enquiring after their last bequests and wishes and the addresses of their relations ; then he wrote everything down carefully in a book bound in dark green.

I had myself conducted to Dr. Fellerer, the new regimental doctor, from whom I hoped to procure tetanus serum. In a large room on the ground floor he was occupied with the dangerously wounded ; he did not notice my entrance. To disturb him now would be almost sacrilegious ; but my object was so important that I could not retire, and as a spectator too I was glad to remain ; for never have I seen a difficult task performed with such sureness and spontaneous ease. Nothing seemed to harass or hurry the doctor, and whether it was a severed artery to be bound or a broken limb to be put in

splints, his hands seemed to do everything perfectly and as if of their own will. That pure dispassionate action to which we too aspire was proceeding here swiftly and serenely in the midst of ruin and destruction.

At last his eye caught me, and now I received my supply of serum, as much as I wanted, and had only to give him a little morphia in exchange. Six men, Germans and Roumanians, were lying apart on some straw. They had abdominal wounds, and the stretcher-bearers detailed for them had not yet arrived; every ten minutes they were given hot compresses; and Fellerer advised me to use this treatment too. He had often found it efficacious.

We had expected to be sent into action at once; but we were not yet needed.

In rain which froze in falling, half water and half hail, we clambered down into a ravine and set up our tents among

very old pines covered with clumps of Iceland moss. A high mountain concealed us from the enemy ; so permission was given to light fires, but the damp wood refused to burn. Also hunger began to gnaw at us. This time the bread was badly baked, still partly dough, and half mouldy. Nevertheless, we would have been glad of a slice if there had been any jam available ; but it was lacking too. Then I remembered the large tin which my kind friend Frau Margaret von Schalding, well known for her many years' assistance in fighting disease, had sent when we were still stationed at Libermont. I did not know the contents, but they would hardly be unwelcome in our situation. Rehm fished out the tin from the bottom of my haversack, and carefully cut round the lid ; it was filled to the brim with golden-brown liquid honey. And now the miracle of the loaves and fishes seems to be revived ; the vessel has already refreshed the occupants of

three tents and it is still more than half-full.

Six o'clock in the evening.

Once more the rôle of helper has fallen on my shoulders. After all our attempts to kindle a fire had failed I suddenly remembered Regina's reliquary, which must be in one of the side pockets of the case, among the dressings. My tent stood a little apart from the others behind a tree-trunk ; nobody was paying attention to me at the moment. In a trice the little box was chopped into splinters and set on fire, then the waxen hand laid on top. The red melted off, the white centre of the wax could be seen, and soon the rich resinous wood sticky with wax burst into flames. The others greeted my unexpected sacrificial fire with shouts of joy ; from all the tents they came out to carry away embers, and Regina herself might have been glad to see the whole ravine now blazing and flashing with camp-fires.

HALLESUL, AT THE FOOT OF RUNCUL MARE.

16th November, 1916.

We were awakened at half-past one, the tents struck, and everything hastily packed ; we set off almost drunken with sleep. For a stretch the dying camp-fires lighted us ; then we felt our way forward through the darkness of the wood. Each of us sought for some bright object on the back of the man before him ; I guided myself by the faint gleam of a tin flask on someone's belt. Snow was falling through the mist, and after that it grew lighter ; the moon must be somewhere above us. We went on faster and faster, through ravines, over little bridges, round ledges, for hours. The soldiers were carrying only their light attack equipment ; their haversacks were being kept for them in Oitóz.

When we reached the little wooded valley of Hallesul, a gigantic mountain shape loomed before us through the mist ; and immediately everybody guessed

that we were at our destination. Here our task was a different one from that before the little hill of Lespédii ; we had to storm a steep frontier mountain strongly held by the enemy, which, as it was adjacent to an important pass, threatened the Transylvanian lands. It must be taken within half an hour, or it could not be taken at all. It was decided to dispense with the aid of artillery fire ; Red Indian style, two companies were to creep forward in scattered formation, and charge the enemy face to face and kill them or drive them to flight. Beside the place where the sections were being distributed into groups for the attack by the Major, we doctors remained behind with the Adjutants and awaited further orders. We looked round to see if we could find any place where a bandaging-station could be set up ; but no dug-out was to be found and no running water. Already my luminous watch showed that the time was almost past ; a vague hope

awoke that the attack might yet be recalled at the last moment, or that perhaps an overture for peace was already flying round the world outside there covered with darkness—then the German battle-cry burst out, a moment of absolute silence followed, and now began a violent firing of such intensity as we had never heard before. We could clearly distinguish the sharp, simultaneous salvos of our soldiers from the hollow, scattered firing of our startled enemies. Without waiting for a command we left the wood, and now it was as if morning had come with a bound. Opposite us rose a bare, riven, conical peak, from which thin puffs of vapour floated up into the blue. The first figures we caught sight of were some Roumanian prisoners who were warily carrying German wounded down into the valley, and in a moment the crowd of wounded and dying forced us to turn the unprotected place where we were standing into a dressing-station. A shell exploded

among us and killed two of the wounded, then a captain of a Hungarian reserve company came up and told us of a tolerably complete Red Cross dug-out near by in the woods. We had little boards nailed to the trees to show the way, and carried the wounded into the almost empty dug-out, which had a small annex with camp-beds and a table for the doctors. Two very young Hungarian Red Cross ensigns greeted us, soft-voiced and graceful, the red silken Genevan Cross on their snowy-white armlets ; they offered their assistance and set to work with a practised ease of which we would not have thought their fine boyish hands capable. Suffering in a hundred forms poured in, and an order from the Major came at a very inopportune moment, telling us to present ourselves at the command by nine o'clock. We took our time, however, and did not begin our ascent until after ten.

The mountain we climbed was a moun-

tain of blindness and death. From the eastern slope, where the battle was not yet decided, wild cries rang through the rattle of the musketry ; and up here, in the position we had captured, the enemy were wreaking their vengeance on the conquerors. Like a swarm of hornets the shells dashed against the rocks, tearing the flesh from the limbs of the living and the dead. Sometimes German wounded called to us, sometimes Roumanian, who were now being mutilated for a second time by the fire of their comrades. Some of them suffered in silence ; others twisted like wounded snakes. Through the zone of death we saw German lightly wounded descending the mountain, a few white and shaken, but others walking jauntily, dressed up as if for a fancy-dress ball in the gay-coloured belts, jackets, and military decorations of their dead enemies. One had brought back a gramophone with him from the Roumanian lines ; now an idea suddenly struck him, he

placed it on a stone and set it going, the page in *Figaro* began to sing, and like the voice of a mad soul Mozart's music rose in a world of ruin. The despatch-orderly Glavina was leaning against a granite block near the commander's dug-out ; he was still breathing, but on his face was already the prescient look of the dead. We could see no trace of blood. Fighting down our sorrow and apprehension, we searched for the wound and found at last a tiny splinter driven into the nape of the neck. Soon his breathing ceased. A few closely written sheets of paper, which must have fallen out of his pocket, I took with me to hand over to the Adjutant ; but I noticed on the way back that they did not contain anything official, so I kept them beside me for the time being. We told the Major that the Bosnian stretcher-bearers who had been arranged for had not yet come ; he promised to communicate with the Division and sent us back to Hallesul.

Meanwhile the sky had darkened; snow began to fall. A flowing white veil shut off the guns from the targets they were firing at; one after another they fell silent, and we descended almost in safety. A Roumanian stretched between two birch trunks lay across my path; I thought he was dead and was stepping over him, when I heard a groan and felt a feeble but perceptible tug at my cloak. Turning round I looked down on the dying face of a man of about thirty; his eyes were closed, his mouth terribly twisted with pain. His fingers still clutched fast the hem of my cloak. Through a grey cape which covered his breast a slight vapour was rising; R. threw it back; under his torn ribs his lungs and heart lay exposed, the heart beating sluggishly. A number of silver and copper medals of saints, which he had been wearing on a black ribbon round his neck, were driven deep into his flesh, some of them much bent. We

covered him up again. The man half opened his eyes ; his lips moved. Simply for the sake of doing something I filled my morphia syringe, and then I saw that this was what he seemed to want : he pushed the cloak aside and tried to stretch out his arm to me in readiness. Behaviour hard to account for in a man already almost dead ! But perhaps there is an infinitely keen, infinitely poignant anguish which a man conscious of approaching death desires to be rid of at any price, because it holds him fast to life in burning pain, and hinders a free and clean parting : who knows ? After the injection he laid his head back against the birch almost in comfort and closed his eyes in whose deep sockets large snow-flakes were already beginning to fall. We hurried on ; it was almost an hour before we reached Hallesul.

The snow continued to fall. The artillery slept. But above there the bullets

still spat against the trees, and the air was full of a scent of resin from the mutilated wood. We waited in vain for the Bosnian stretcher-bearers. They must have lost their way. In the dug-out there was scarcely room even for the Hungarians and Germans; the seriously wounded among the Roumanians had to lie outside among the pines on the snow. We detailed one of their Red Cross corporals, a young Jew, to look after them. He kindled a fire which burnt wretchedly and hissed when the snow-flakes fell on it. A few men were holding their hands out over it. One of them kept on smiling, and crossed himself from time to time.

In the dug-out the smell of blood became thicker and thicker. Its viscid, bestial stench exasperated and oppressed our nerves; we had to run out every now and then. The red sap with which life with all its pleasure, pain, fury, compassion, madness, and wisdom is bound

up : why does it evoke such an unbearable loathing as soon as it is spilt ?

Evening.

The Bosnians have failed to come after all ; perhaps they have been requisitioned by some other company. Several slightly wounded have offered to transport our gravest cases to Oitóz ; they will reach there about midnight. Now the rest can be given more comfortable places, and five Roumanians have been taken into the dug-out. Three more of the Roumanians have died ; the others are crowding so close to the fire that some have singed their boots. There are a great many young lads among them with smooth, pleasant, round faces : how lean, how stamped with experience, how sunk in brooding thought, how altered by the war, our young German soldiers look in comparison ! The Jewish corporal, who can speak German, asked me in the name of his comrades when they would be

transferred to a hospital, whereupon I had to tell him the truth, that the nearest hospital was more than twenty hours' journey away, and also that the expected stretcher-bearers had failed us and could hardly arrive now before to-morrow. With visible reluctance he translated the bad news, and indeed the despair which appeared on all their faces was so terrible that I let myself be led into a piece of folly, and, as if I were trying to appease children by facile promises, said on the spur of the moment that they must have patience and do their best for a little, and whether the stretcher-bearers came or not, I would get them under cover before dark in any case, and procure as much food for them to eat as they wanted. The Jew translated word for word ; they listened and cheered up again. But hardly had the promise been given when its complete folly struck to my heart. We had hardly accommodation for our own men ; besides, our food supply was

so scanty that the survivors were throwing themselves ravenously on whatever the dead left behind ; and finally I had no authority to do anything—how could I have overlooked all this ? Lance-Corporal W. declared that they did not deserve so much consideration ; our comrades too were lying on the mountain among ice and snow ; war was war, the Roumanians had turned against us, now they could bear the consequences. There was nothing to reply at the moment ; but I caught once more at the hope that the Bosnians might come, and as there was nothing more to do in the dug-out, went for a little distance up the mountain, keeping at first close behind the lines, where the sentries clad in white snow-jackets and caps stood behind the parapets like priests celebrating a silent Mass. Despatch orderlies came and went ; the bullets flew past with a singing noise. Reaching higher ground I could see through the drifting snow a reddish

flitting luminance; it could not be in our lines, as the enemy trenches ran slanting over the next hill. Figures appeared within the glow, lifted up a stretcher and carried it away; then the light went out. I climbed further and came to a tall tree among whose branches a greyish-white bird was fluttering, almost as big as a thrush, a snow-finch perhaps; it is the first bird I have seen among those silent woods. Snow was still falling; in a million fragments all space seemed to be sinking and sinking here; I could feel the sucking and life-giving billows of the void.

When I got back to Hallesul I had a surprise. I looked round for my Roumanians: not one was to be seen. Only the dead, already covered with snow, lay beside the smoking embers. So the stretcher-bearers have come after all, I thought and went on, but presently I came upon the Hungarian company commander who had found the dressing-

station for us in the morning ; he seemed to have been waiting for me. And now I learned—a contingency which in small as in great affairs may sometimes happen —that somebody must keep the promises which another has irresponsibly made. In a few words the Captain excused himself for having encroached somewhat on my authority by transferring the prisoners to another position during my absence ; his men had looked for me everywhere without success. Through the round little window in his dug-out near by he had watched all day (as at a magic lantern) the group of wounded and dying round their miserable fire ; finally it had been too much for his overwrought nerves. Some distance away in a hollow there was an empty wood-shed ; the Roumanians were there now, he had sent them some warm food as well. I began to thank him, but he would not listen. " You poor Germans," he said, laughing, " have nothing to eat

yourselves, while we Hungarians are rolling in abundance for the time being." With that he guided me through undergrowth and snow-drifts to the hollow. In the hut the wounded were lying on pine branches by candlelight. They were eating tinned meat and drinking hot tea out of cans. The corporal got up, reported to the officer in German, then turned to me and expressed in the name of all his thanks for the accommodation and food. The Hungarian looked at me in bewilderment. I tried to explain his error to the corporal, and acquainted the Captain with my rash promise; both smiled politely, but neither seemed quite to understand.

When we got outside again the Germans and Roumanians had begun to forewarn each other by sending up countless star-shells; all Hallesul and the mountains round flickered bright red and green, and through the changing illumination the snow fell like confetti. Only seldom did

a shot go off; at times, through the hiss of the star-shells, one could hear again, as at Mount Kishavas, the howling of wolves in the far distance.

17th November.

At daybreak rifle firing, which soon fell silent. After sunrise the overcast sky cleared; one could see behind a transparent veil of cloud the waning moon like an embryonic golden shape. The stretcher-bearers have come, and in relays all the wounded are being carried away. Pirkl must remain here; his pulse is almost imperceptible, and he would most probably reach Oitóz as a corpse. His brother has obtained an hour's leave to visit him. As Pirkl cannot speak any longer his brother is employing his time in digging a grave for the still living man, and carving a cross, on which he is very carefully printing in blue pencil the name of the fallen.

At nine o'clock appeared thirteen Rou-

manians under the leadership of a Rabbi bearing a flag ; they requested an interview with the Hungarian Captain and surrendered in form. The ceremony had a touch of the theatrical, for which the Hungarians, like the Roumanians, have a a more genuine instinct than we. The day has passed quietly. The cold has given way, a thawing wind is melting the ice and snow from the black rocky slopes. Often one passes through a waft of warm air, as if there were furnaces near by. A pale sun, casting a dispersed radiance, can be seen through a veil of white vapour like blotting-paper. At evening the Hungarian Red Cross ensigns drew long flasks out of their roomy haversacks, then finely cut glasses, and refreshed themselves and us with hot wine.

18th November.

No wonder that one sleeps and dreams a great deal in the twilight of the winter woods. If one struggles against the

temptation, it only becomes worse. In France, before my leave, when I still believed in a quick termination of the war, all my dreams were merely fanciful; floating in easy irrelevance they squandered themselves among friends and women of my acquaintance; and none of them had any connection with the others. But since there has been no more talk of peace and home-coming, not only have those apparitions grown in vividness, but it is as if they were concealing from me a mysterious goal to which they wanted to lead me by circuitous ways. At times those dreams are robbed of their full development by some external happening, and abruptly left as a rough sketch. This morning a shell exploded in front of our dug-out, and wakened me out of a dream which remained very distinct because, like a mole suddenly brought into the light, it had no time to slip away again. I had been awakened in the night and noticed that the dug-out

was swarming with mice. They flitted over the table, nibbled at the bread, and brushed several times so delicately against the Hungarians' cut glasses that they produced a quite lovely series of clear ringing sounds. With this the repulsiveness of the little creatures was suddenly gone, they took on a sort of spectral gnome-like air, and watching a whole enchanting vaudeville of mouse metamorphoses I fell asleep. As this was happening the mice lost more and more their dark colour ; till finally they were all a glittering white and running to and fro on a green level surface. But when I wanted to look at them more closely I found myself standing at a billiard-table in a smoky café, where an invisible orchestra was blaring in the distance, and instead of mice I was now watching white balls flying over the green cloth. One of the billiard players was the Roumanian to whom we had given the morphia injection on the mountain-side. Swaying like a

dancer he circled round the table and with hardly perceptible gestures with his cue kept the balls in motion without touching them. The balls became more radiant every moment; humming like tops they rolled backwards and forwards with spherelike certainty on the green cloth; they never touched, and when they flew back from the edge they waxed in swiftness and radiance. In reality they were indistinguishable; yet soon one of them seemed to me to have a peculiar splendour; more, I felt that my whole destiny was involved with it—if it were to stand still or knock against one of the others some boundless evil would be let loose. A little distance away Regina, now a maid-servant, was going from table to table and gathering up the cigarette-ends and broken glasses and casting them into a rubbish pail which she was painfully dragging along. Suddenly she stood close beside me and whispered: "Did you know? I've just

met your shadow." Then she went over to the billiard-table, carelessly seized my wonderful ball, threw it in among the other rubbish and replaced the lid on the pail. The Roumanian, who suddenly had Glavina's face now, went on playing; his eye-sockets were filled with snow, but he did not seem to mind. Then I lifted my hand and struck Regina on the brow, and she immediately fell asleep where she stood with an indescribably happy smile. Yet the ball found no rest even in the pail; I could hear its humming grow shriller and shriller, and now and then it squeaked like a mouse. At the same time the floor began to sway; I had difficulty in keeping my feet. Everything rocked to and fro; Regina, rigid in sleep, still smiling, leant down over me like a statue, superhumanly tall, as if about to crush me. And that was the second when the shell exploded outside with a shattering report. In a moment I was on my feet. A long-drawn cry echoed out

and suddenly broke off, as if it had burst the vocal cords of its owner. Raab, Rehm, and a few of the wounded ran to the door ; others, seeking shelter, pushed their way in from outside. Beside the shell-hole lay a Hungarian soldier, already dead. Nobody else was wounded. The shell must have been a stray one ; it was not followed up.

. . . . .

Private Pirkl has been lying for two days now unconscious in the dressing-room, but to-day, after the tenth injection, his pulse became strong again, and his breathing deep and regular. Having completely come to himself he drank half a canteen of tea and ate some tinned meat. He felt very uncomfortable, lying in his own filth, and got up at the first opportunity and went outside, where he suddenly caught sight of the cross which his brother had carved for him. His attention aroused he read his name, then

looked down into the open grave rubbing his eyes. All at once he began to laugh so heartily that the capeline bandage, which had become loose, fell off his head. Then he snapped his fingers, like one who had discovered the greatest joke in the world, and went on his way laughing. Without X-rays it will hardly be possible to locate his wound. At the moment it looks as if the bullet had not penetrated the skull itself, but only bruised the cervical vertebræ immediately beneath the cerebellum.

20th November.

A cloudy day, which has passed without much fighting. The rain has washed all the dead out of the snow ; now one after another they are being buried. A great number of the men are reporting sick ; almost all of us are troubled by a dry, painful inflammation of the eyes. Some are feverish, and a few have had their toes frost-bitten again. Then there is the

recurring toll of those who through carelessness are picked off by the sharpshooters, who lie concealed in trees. For half a day they will lie in wait with the patience of animals for one of our men to forget himself and leave cover; a feline kind of warfare for which no soldier in the world, certainly, is less adapted than the German. Those of us who are still in tolerable health watch not without satisfaction the fighting strength sinking towards the minimum, for that means being relieved; and even the Major remains indulgently silent when he is told of my fairly wholesale consignments to the hospital. Lieutenant Leverenz declares, it is true, that I am doing more damage to our fighting strength than the enemy; but he admits that not even the best men can be expected to endure more than three days and three nights here. There are no dug-outs on the mountain; the soldiers have to lie on the wet snow behind rocks and trees; they cannot

risk lighting a fire, and while it is light they dare not lift their heads. But what we suffer from most of all is a thirst which is accompanied by a horrible loathing for drinking. The melting snow which trickles down from the blood-drenched slopes is so mingled with incipient corruption that we cannot even use it for making tea, far less for drinking.

KÉZDI-ALMÁS,

22nd November, 1916.

Relieved by the Prussian Landwehr yesterday evening, we clambered down through the driving snow to Oitóz, and got off our way several times in the darkness. Whether it is possible that one's brain can sleep for a second or so while one's legs keep on marching, I cannot say; but I know that once during our night march a blue vessel with golden lettering appeared close before my eyes, and that I started as if just awakened, and felt perceptibly refreshed. We

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reached the barracks after midnight. Soon after eight next morning, with the sky clearing, we marched further, the men having got back their haversacks ; those of the fallen were sent on behind on a huge waggon. The battalion is quite small now ; one became painfully aware of it on the march. A little distance from Kézdi-Almás we caught sight of the Colonel and his staff with a full brass-band ; they were waiting for us. When we came within good hearing distance the drums beat out a tattoo, a gay tune followed, then the band crashed into a march from *Carmen*. Our dirty grey ranks which trailed behind, tired and beaten as if coming from a defeat, began to straighten themselves ; little by little they grasped the honour which the old Colonel had prepared for them. After *Carmen* we were given the song of the good comrade, and the music did not stop until our vanguard reached the village, where the children, attracted by

the playing, ran to meet us with joyful faces.

The day passed quietly, but several men reported sick on account of a tightness in the chest. On examination we discovered that their hearts were frequently missing a beat. No one wanted to go into hospital; they all hoped for a few weeks' rest, and were quite content with a course of valerian-drops. When Raab went to unlock the ambulance van the key was missing, and we could not hunt up a single locksmith in the village. For the moment, however, the supplies which we have in the bandage chest are sufficient. Dehm and Raab have almost quarrelled because each accused the other of losing the key.

Our quarters are generally praised. I have a large room, the floor strewn with fine sand; a cross to scare witches, hung with knick-knacks, is fastened to the wall; the broad bed is covered with rugs dyed red. But the loveliest thing of all is the

large orchard behind the house. Surrounded by an interwoven osier hedge, very high and thick, it lies as in a basket. In one corner a late sunflower is still blooming. The deep golden disc has thrust itself far forward and turned over at the edges, so strong in summer must have been the will of the flower to follow the sun through its complete course. Now the velvety bloom is dead-coloured in patches or fallen away, and the grey mosaic of seeds uncovered. Just as I was passing a grey bird flew away with a seed in its beak and disappeared into the twilight.

KÉZDI-ALMÁS,

25*th November*, 1916.

For the next two days still we are likely to be safe from any sudden alarm. We are settling down ; many are unpacking their books and best uniforms, others are setting out a photograph or two on their tables. My quarters are seething

with people ; all the neighbours come in and out ; an old woman has just been in begging for brandy. This morning I was the witness of a scene which in itself perhaps has no significance, but yet seems to me to come home both to myself and others. A few weeks ago there was a large litter of kittens in the house ; they have become a nuisance now, for there is no milk for them. A fifteen-year-old lad who is on service here seems to have got instructions to destroy the superfluous ones. While I was writing in my room I saw him carrying them across the yard, and, before I could guess his intention, dashing them one after the other with incredible speed against the wall of a shed, where they remained lying ; then whistling and swinging his arms as usual he returned to the kitchen, where the food was just being set out, sat down with the others, and began to eat heartily. But one kitten quite unlike the others, a bluish-grey kitten with a white head,

breast, and legs, and a light silvery fringe on the back of its neck, was only stunned and began to recover little by little. It attempted a few unsteady steps, sat down, washed itself for a while behind the ears, as if that would help it to come to its senses ; then crept across the yard into the house. Now I noticed for the first time that it was bleeding from the chin ; otherwise it seemed unhurt. Somewhat hesitatingly it went in through the kitchen door and looked around. When it saw the people eating at the table it tried to jump on to the bench, and after a few attempts succeeded ; then it sat still for a while. At last it rubbed itself cajolingly against the elbow of its murderer, who was comfortably eating. From my concealed position I had a good view of him, and I lost nothing that followed. When he became aware of the kitten he still went on eating for a little ; then all at once he seemed to be struggling with nausea, gulped once or twice and pushed

away his spoon. As soon as the others were gone he touched the kitten cautiously, as if he were afraid of it or doubted its physical presence. Finally he lifted it on to the table with extreme care, as if it were of porcelain, and crumbled up for it what was left of his meat and bread. It ate a little, and that made him visibly happy. When the housewife came in he began to talk to her urgently; I caught several times the word "Matchka," and when he said it he would always point towards the kitten. The woman gazed at it in silence and went away again. Then the lad went out into the yard to his work. He took up the dead kittens with the same care he had shown to the living, and carried them away. It seems to me that something in his nature has changed; his face is more alert, his step firmer, and I have not heard him whistling since. To-morrow the Austrian Crown Prince is coming to review the troops at Lemhény. I reported myself as indisposed and asked

to be allowed to remain in Kézdi-Almás. It has become very windy and cold.

28th November.

The bluish-grey kitten has died to-day, and, as I have a free hour left, I must set down the brief story of its sufferings ; it has been part of my day's experience in any case. Early yesterday morning I was awakened by a soft whimpering and growling. In the great room the Hungarian lad was crouching on the floor, with a tremulous expression trying the kitten by turns with a dish of water and one of milk. During the night it had vomited blood, and in the morning bile. It paid no attention to the milk, but kept gazing steadily at the water. As I went near it slowly lifted its head like a tired and sorrowful human being. Its skull seemed to have shrunk, the gold-rimmed amber yellow of the eyes was dimmed, its nose was very hot. It was clearly suffering from fever and a burning thirst.

Whimpering and growling by turns it approached the water with its nose, but as soon as it touched it shrank back with an angry noise; obviously the attempt to drink caused it pain. Yet its raging thirst always drove it back again to the water. Suddenly it dipped one of its forepaws in, then the other; finally it tried to get in altogether, but the dish was much too small. A large basin was filled; with all the burning heat of its body the kitten laid itself down in the water and remained peacefully resting for a while.

Meanwhile the farmer's wife had come in; children and neighbours arrived; a circle of curiosity and pity closed round the poor beast and its anguish. Only yesterday it had been heedlessly thrown out; but now no one thought of ending its suffering by a speedy death; they all discovered that it was a delightful little kitten, and were full of counsels and specifics for curing it. As if through its

sufferings it had been brought into sacred proximity with them, they felt almost a reverent feeling before it, the children especially. And in reality there was something worthy of admiration in the bearing of the tiny kitten, something hardly to be described, which lifted it above its sufferings; a sort of pride, a consciousness of its native wild grace which death could bit by bit wear down or suddenly crush, but could never bend. Ignoring its misery, it strove to remain true to its nature; shaken already by the pangs of dissolution, it retained its dignity and kept its head gracefully inclined as before; and this impressed them all far more deeply, it is certain, than even its suffering. Some spiritual meaning is hidden here, and the ancient Egyptians knew very well why they considered the cat sacred and punished those who killed it.

But the villagers of Kézdi-Almás very soon exhausted all their good advice, and

at last looked full of expectation towards me. Dehm, who came in just then, advised morphia ; I suggested atropine as well. We had the kitten lifted out of its bath, and injected a tiny drop of the solution in its leg, at which one of the little girls screamed. But Matchka did not even twitch, so filled was its body with internal pain. After three minutes it made towards a patch of sunshine which fell into the room, stretched itself out comfortably, laid its head along its front paws and went to sleep ; sometimes it growled softly in its dreams. We found it there much later, when the sun had long gone away ; then began again its vain journeys to the water. We repeated the injection three times stronger. After that the kitten was very gay at first, almost skittish, cutting strangely impudent capers, as if incipient derangement were already altering its nature ; but it still remained beautiful in the harmony of its movements. Suddenly it sprang up on

me and rubbed its nose against my face. I lifted it and laid it down at my feet; it growled but made no resistance, and fell asleep at once. Wakening at two o'clock I examined it by the light of my pocket-torch; it was twitching slightly in its sleep. Curled cosily in a ball, its head was resting on my left foot. My position was uncomfortable, and I tried to draw my foot away; but then it began to growl angrily and even made as if to bite my toe. So I summoned the courtesy which is due by us to a dying creature and lay still. Forced thus into quietness by the little creature, I presently noticed a change in myself as well, a curious inner stillness and heightening of my faculties, such as the monks, I believe, call concentration. My body felt lighter, my thoughts came more freely and with more certainty than usual. Vivid intuitions of the nature of certain diseases thronged up first; I knew suddenly that I could handle them much more simply

in future. All the time I remained aware that Matchka was responsible for this heightened state, and never have I been more convinced that we are insensibly led to ourselves not only by human beings, spirits, and planets, but often by animals and plants as well, yes, even by inanimate matter, from all of which finally goes out what in theology is called grace. And now all the good things which I had heard or read about cats flew through my mind in a rapid and clear procession; last of all the touching myth of a great flood which my mother had often related to me. On the limitless storm-swept waters a cradle had been seen with a child sleeping in it. There was a cat in the cradle as well, and every time that it threatened to capsize, the alert cat would spring to the other side so as to restore the balance, until finally the little boat remained hanging in the branches of a great oak. The flood sank, the cradle was rescued, and baby and cat were

found alive and unhurt. As no one knew who the little boy's parents were, the people gave him the name of Dold, which means tree-top, and he became the sire of a great and famous people.

These recollections started a whole train of thought which after wandering far at last came back to the immediate everyday things which were most occupying me at the moment. All at once I was quite certain that the key of the ambulance van was lying in one of the big leather cases, among bandages and instruments ; very probably I had mislaid it there myself. Rid at last of this anxiety, I began to nod in spite of myself, and slept until Rehm wakened me bringing in my morning tea. I had a search made for the key at once ; they found it, right enough, in the place I had thought of. But Matchka did not waken again. While I was getting up her breathing grew more difficult, then came a sudden, sharp

wail, and a final deep, almost comfortable respiration.

At that moment the orderly brought the command to fall in. The review of the troops at Lemhény had been cancelled. We packed our things. How lucky that the key had been found! Our fine uniforms were discarded, the photographs disappeared into our haversacks. The Hungarian boy was kneeling beside the dead kitten and stroking it and crying. There is always beauty at the moment when a ray from eternity strikes upon our gross natures—we should reverence every illumination, every transfiguring terror—I could vouch that this boy will never lift his hand again against a living creature—may God give each of us his animal and his sin to awaken him. But there must be other kinds of illumination, out of which, from far purer terrors, a deed goes up like a star.

Snow-clouds cover the sky. The frost has set in, the sunflower is misted with

rime. The seeds are now frozen fast, the bird will have a job to pick them out. To the east there is a dull rattle of rifle firing. It is four o'clock. We are to march off for Kézdi-Vásárhely.

KÖZÉPLAK,

29th November : evening.

The regiment was transported last night on twenty-nine motor waggons over the Gyimes Pass to the valley of Hidegség. They were ordinary goods waggons, and the wheels, like all those in this country, were without rubber tyres ; our one rocked more perilously every minute on the rough ground and suddenly ran plump into a trench, without overturning, however. We tried without success to pull it out again. Five of the waggons which, more happily guided, followed at long intervals, overhauled us ; we shouted to each of them to come and help us, but without effect. Our lot waited on in dull fury ; one or two laughed, however,

as if the momentary discomfort offered a means of escape from greater ones. Seeing that help could not be secured as a favour, it might be got by compulsion ; I advised the men to spread out and block the way and show a threatening face to the next waggon. This insidious device succeeded ; as soon as he saw our resolute group the driver stopped at once. In a few minutes our waggon was fastened by a chain to the other and drawn on to the road.

Then we went on again through the starless night, our eyelashes freezing, gazing fixedly at the glaring fan of light which flew before us. I sat in front beside the driver, a young Pole, whose inefficient and nervous hands often brought us to the verge of a precipice. Advice or warning would have been of little use ; it was best to leave him to himself and secretly wish him good guidance. When we reached the high pass dawn was breaking. A freezing north-east wind whistled over us ; the clouds

were high up. A waste landscape appeared, grey mountain peaks, very bare, the naked slopes covered with jutting ledges and grey rocks, and, among those, huts almost indistinguishable from the rocks ; at the foot a gravelly stream with houses on the bank. As the light grew clearer we discerned vast masses of troops marching eastward, along the valleys and mountain roads. This advance of thousands of men was a gloomy and fatal spectacle. Seen thus they seemed to be drawn along spokes of the same wheel towards a devouring and invisible axle. If there were only some great prophetic sign to make all their labour blessed to them ! But the best part of them are caught up in a dream of humanity of which perhaps they have never become conscious ; and only now and then does it warn a soul here and there that he serves an unknown lord of the future.

At eight o'clock in the morning we reached the scattered village of Középlak.

A large yellow house, near the church, was indicated to me as Staff Headquarters. It consists of two small rooms and a spacious hall filled with smoke from a dilapidated stove. An assistant medical officer was lying asleep on the floor in his boots and clothes; in its complete exhaustion his dirty emaciated face was like that of a dead man. In a corner, bent over cards, the Major and his Adjutant sat whispering; opposite, a red-bearded Austrian Captain was talking into the telephone with many polite inclinations of the head. Judging from one thing and another I felt a tension in the air, which was later explained to me. The Austrian—he was the district Commandant as well as Captain—had told the Major that there wasn't another vacant house in all Középlak, and had courteously offered to share his own comfortable quarters with our officers; whereat our Commander had somewhat curtly requested him to vacate the build-

ing. This demand was refused, and the Major broke off the conversation with a few comprehensive insults about the Austrian Army. The Austrian officer shrugged and retired, not without remarking, however, that he had already arranged for the food of the German officers to be cooked along with his own, but that now, after such unfriendly conduct, he must cancel the arrangement, and confine himself to purely official relations.

I lay down alongside the assistant medical officer and slept till eleven. Then, after attending to a few things, I went down into Hidegség. When one reaches a river bank it is as if suddenly one were made free of all the riches and virtue of a country. The natives came my way, first of all the old men, then the young women and girls. These are a stately breed, with a light, free, high carriage and round healthy faces moulded to beauty by the spirit of their race, so that each face seems to ratify the others.

One thinks at first of Italy ; but there is something else as well, a hint of animal grace, and in addition something shut in as if listening to itself, a wild and ancient nobility that suggests Asia. The spurious fashionable dresses which we saw no longer ago than yesterday have disappeared ; the women here seem to wear on their bodies nothing except what they have fashioned themselves ; instead of a skirt, a number of aprons of a dark colour with gay embroidery, which are simply tied on one after the other, alternatively from the back and the front, so that when the girls walk one can see their legs encased in white woollen stockings ; round the bust they have jackets of hide, the fur inwards, the white beautifully embroidered leather turned out ; black head-kerchiefs, and shoes with pointed toes. When the troops march past they do not stand to gape at the soldiers like other country girls ; one feels that here a land begins where the people are stern

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and sufficient to themselves, and where Fate fulfils itself swiftly and unconditionally.

The river has a strange look. It must have overflowed its banks some days ago ; then suddenly came the frost, and a thin covering of ice formed, under which the water soon began to sink again. Now like a brittle crystal ring the ice surrounds both stem and trunk ; like a bridge hung with tinkling bells it spans the mirrored river ; and it covers the huge black rocks along the bank with convoluted shells fringed with rime.

At midday while, in hostile isolation, we Germans ate our hard bread and revolting bully-beef with our bitter coffee, at our Allies' table in the same room wine corks were popping, and Austrian orderlies, their deliberately vacant gaze fixed on us, bore past us from the kitchen the most appetising cutlets and pancakes. We younger and less important officers felt the pain of deprivation somewhat less-

ened, however, when we saw that our commander, usually so spartan, found renunciation this once quite unendurable. Forgetting all his pride he tried to persuade our cook to chum up with the Austrian food-orderlies and wangle a few pancakes for us at least. But the cook nipped all his hopes. "The Austrians won't have anything to do with us," he said.

In the afternoon sharp rifle firing could be heard towards the east. The Adjutant was glued to the telephone. Towards five we were ordered to be in marching readiness; at six the order was cancelled again.

HOSSZUHAVAS-RAKOTTYÂS,

1st December.

The last night in November has remained quiet. At midday to-day the alarm was given, and immediately afterwards we marched off. A rumour went round that the Russians and Roumanians

had broken through the Hungarian lines and stormed the mountain of Mihályszállás. To our battalion fell the task of checking the enemy and recapturing the mountain. We looked for Mihályszállás on the map and were astonished to find ourselves so near the enemy lines. The field-kitchens, which were lit before we started, were kept going during the march. We ate on the boulders beside the river bank, then hastened on again, following the course of the stream. At first, drawn by curiosity, the women and children from Közeplák followed us ; but soon they gave it up in despair. A little pig, black as a crow, which had lost its way, trotted happily for some distance along with us, and two sections of the Eighth Company were already quarrelling over the secure prize, when a young lad came running and drove it back with cries of joy to the village.

The day has been gloomy and short. Mists hung like mildew round the stunted

pines with which the hills were sparsely covered. Groups of fugitives with their cattle and vehicles passed us in the dim light; last of all a little waggon drawn by two beautiful horned silvery-grey oxen. The leader of the procession was a tall woman with a black head-kerchief, a long brown cloak, and a staff in her hand. A child clasping a doll to its breast sat above among the hasty confusion of household effects; an old man and a young girl pushed behind and gathered up anything that fell. A boy, scarcely ten, with a strangely remote and serene face, ran alongside the waggon and hummed a melody as if in happy absorption. Under his left arm he carried a picture with a black frame, with his right hand he drew maize out of his pocket now and then and held it to the mouth of a calf which trotted along tethered to the waggon. To me this group had something statuesque, especially the matron who walked in front; and I under-

stood what Glavina had meant when he wrote that there is something sacred about a stranger which can only be seized by us a single time unsullied by commonplace perception. With a free, proud carriage, her face moulded in the sanguine lines of unspoilt youth, her strong brows drawn with pain, the matron stared straight before her without giving us a glance, as if she incarnated a life which had remained true to itself and whole, and we were fallen away and lost.

Night fell; like grey ashes the mist came down, the valley wound on endlessly. For whole stretches we waded through puddles, the water squelching in our riven boots. The Sixth Company broke off once and got lost in a neighbouring valley; after a half-hour of shouting and light-signals connections were established again. An infinite weariness descended upon us. Some of the men could not hold in their rage and despondency. "Give us whole boots, at any rate," one

growled, "if you want us to fight."—"You're fools if you go on any further. I'm going to stay here," another yelled. But the officers paid no attention to those mutinous shouts. They had enough to endure themselves. And they knew that the shouters would keep on going. If they left the ranks without leave their present hardships and dangers would be lessened, but new and worse hardships would begin. All at once, far away in the darkness, there was a blue flash; we heard the report; then it howled round us, and in rapid succession shells churned up the mud. A soldier fell in a heap. Lieutenant S. was wounded. We bandaged him as well as we could in the darkness. It must have been our light-signals which had drawn the fire. A strict command was given not to strike a light. There were no more signs of insubordination. Scared into discipline by the enemy, our men began to talk quietly among themselves; a calm, cheer-

ful temper ruled. By midnight we reached dry and level ground. The Adjutant, who had ridden forward a little distance with the Major, came back towards us. There was not to be a night attack after all, he said; the enemy had given up half of the mountain again and dug themselves in a little further back; we were in the village of Hosszuhavas and would be given quarters, but we must sleep in readiness, without taking off our boots.

With some officers and a crowd of men I found accommodation in a farm-house which had been deserted by its owners. On the table were a salt-cellar and some bread and apples, and beside them a lamp filled with oil which we lit. A bundle of firewood lay behind the stove; under a bench were some coops with hens in them. The half-starved soldiers flung themselves on those in a moment, and delivered them to the cook. The room was full of signs of hurried

flight. A strip of linen was still sticking in the great weaving-loom. Chest and linen-press were half open. Some things had been taken out, then flung back again; but under these, in glittering order, lay whole rows of fine and rough woven cloths and embroidered vests. Gay hangings covered the walls, from which hung sacred images decked with withered flowers, and beside these a plate with the name Julesa in gold lettering.

Seeing that I admired the beautifully embroidered linen so much the others conjectured that I would like to own it, and told me I should have no hesitation in taking some of the prettier things with me as souvenirs. Perhaps some of them coveted those treasures for themselves, and had I, as one of the older men, pocketed one of the cloths, it would have been a signal for general looting. As a matter of fact I was extremely tempted; I pictured to myself Vally's and Wilhelm's joy if I returned home with such marvellous

presents ; and besides I had to admit the truth of what the others said, that all those things would be looted sometime ; in a few hours we would either have to advance or retire and leave our find to other German troops or to the enemy. Suddenly I saw in my mind's eye the fugitives who had passed us ; the thought that this might be the house they had left gained a strange power over me, and now for the first time I could measure the extent of their misfortune. Almost corporeally there rose before my eyes the woman leading her procession ; and not troubling any more about reality I addressed her as the mistress of the house and made her a promise. She seemed to say : What is it that you want ? The winter nights of watching and weaving, do you know these ? Clothes for grandfather, father, mother, and children are all lying here—and our grave-clothes, too, consider that well ! Do you want to attire your wife or your child in these ?

The Germans, people say, are a hard, insolent people difficult for others to understand ; but in their hearts they are a pious people—look then, all lies open here before you ! We have hidden nothing from you, held nothing back ; we have trusted everything to your generosity. Take what you need to quench your hunger and thirst, but do not touch what should not be yours.

Suddenly we all started ; the howling and screaming came through the air again, it was as if a fine fume darkened our eyes, and the shell exploded quite near. The house seemed to rock to its foundations, crockery and glass jingled down, the lamp went out. Every one became conscious at that moment of a horrible omission. It had occurred to no one to cover up the windows, and so the far-flung gleam of the lamp had been a challenge to the enemy. We waited in the darkness for the second shell ; it did not come. Now all the windows were

covered from outside with canvas sheets, and then we lit the lamp again. The cook had remained calmly bowed over the hens on the fire, and the odorous smell of roasting gradually filled the air. I had meanwhile closed the chest as quietly as possible, and on second thoughts decided to make it unapproachable by piling up my large leather bandage cases in front of it and laying my cloak over it.

2nd December.

Fate is letting me off gently. My dressing-station is an empty gendarmes' watch-house with a wide view over the Hidegség country, about half-way between the battalion Staff Head-quarters and the front. While the companies were climbing up to their positions I made up a little of my lost night's sleep. After two hours I awoke in a state which many people must have experienced in some form, though few pay any attention to such things. For three seconds I seemed

to myself to be an oval vacuum, absolutely empty; then on my left side I began with boundless greed to suck into myself an invisible fluid, along with which streamed in all conceivable kinds of images, thoughts, and words, familiar and unfamiliar. Suddenly I was as full as a balloon, and only then did I become perfectly wideawake. At the same time I had a feeling as if Glavina had been dissolved in the fluid.

Snow fell till evening; then followed clear frosty weather. The Russians remain quietly within their lines. They hold the summit; they have evacuated the western slope. Down in the valley their lines run close by Hosszuhavas. A great number of guns are being put into position on our side.

3rd December.

I am establishing myself as well as I can on the lower slope of the mountain; fighting has already begun up above. On a main road near the front a Prussian

ambulance corps is stationed; they receive almost all the wounded and send them on further. So I have a fairly idle time, am left a good deal to myself, write letters, and read Glavina's manuscripts at odd times. The writing is almost illegible and partly obliterated by the wet; but I have deciphered enough to see that it contains only a few jottings, but that he obviously planned a whole, a poem probably. If it only contained elegant, clever, well-turned phrases I would not waste much labour on it; but often it sounds like the cry of a man out of his mind, the words swarm round my heart like bees, I would like to fly from them and yet cannot help listening to them again.

Through the window of the dressing-station one overlooks the wide-spreading valley glittering with ice and snow, in which the scattered settlements look like caterpillars on a cabbage blade. The blue house where the woven linen is

lying is visible too. It is fortunate that our telephone operators are quartered there, for they are good, thoughtful people who still have some reverence left. In the evenings I go down there, ask if the post has come, convince myself that nothing has been touched, and come back again. Oh, I know quite well that in a general sense it does not matter whether, among the thousand houses that are being looted, one should remain unharmed or not. But one's soul needs such half-dreamt-of sanctuaries; they are at once a home and a captured prize for it, and so it keeps guard over them. Does it know itself, indeed, for whom it keeps guard? Perhaps for one who is lying in his cradle now, one who will turn all the terrible shrieks of fury and pain into songs and hymns. . . . It is cold to-day. The sun gleams, pale and small, in the sky, the air sparkles with floating crystals, and rime clings to the trees like steel filings to a magnet.

4th December.

"Let us build up a cairn on the mountain of Kishavas, a trophy to the slain on its icebound floor of rocks and juniper!"

As soon as I got up I set about deciphering Glavina's manuscript; but then a whole crowd of wounded unexpectedly came in, German and Russian. The Russians should have been driven from the summit of Mihályszállás; but the Sixth Company went astray in the mist and arrived an hour too late, so that the attack was only partly successful and the enemy still holds the summit. The Russians are mostly young, powerful men, fair, blue-eyed, curiously childlike in their bearing. They talk away at us familiarly without stopping, as if they had known us for a long time; they seem to take it for granted that we understand them. Amid loud weeping they show their wounds to one another, and while our men bite their lips and suffer in silence, they keep on

screaming the whole time. And there are very few severely wounded among them. Capacious vans are running between us and the field-hospital to-day; everything is going surely and quickly, and the dressing-station is almost clear already. The attack will be resumed to-morrow. More and more guns are being put into position.

It was after three o'clock when Corporal Dehm brought in Infantryman Kristl; he has shown conspicuous bravery in the attack, but afterwards seems to have suddenly lost his reason. Some were convinced that he was only malingering, so as to get out of military service at last; but one did not need to be a doctor to recognise that this was a case of genuine derangement. His pallid, angular face was contorted with boundless apprehension; sometimes he tried to free himself from the corporal's grip, sometimes he clung fast to his arm. On hearing my voice he came to attention, smiling

drowsily, but then fell again into extreme agitation ; suddenly he went on his knees and begged me with clasped hands not to deliver him up to the Russians, for he was unhappy enough already. Then he tore open his tunic and shirt, pulled out his purse and took from it three gold pieces ; he would give me them, he said, if I did not drive him over to the Russians. Yes, he had been badly done in, very badly ; someone had stabbed him in the left side, and it was still bleeding. He tore his shirt still wider, and pointed to an imaginary wound. His father possessed lots of gold pieces besides these, he said, they were buried under the elder tree at home, he himself had helped to bury them, the worse for him, for it was a crime ; if he had refused to lend a hand, and had carried the gold straight to the Reichs Bank, then everything would have turned out differently, and we should have had an honourable peace. He kept on holding the three twenty-

mark pieces in his outstretched hand in the sun, so that I might see how they glittered. Suddenly he brightened up, drew out his watch, put it back again along with the gold pieces without having looked at it, and said his time was up, he must go on guard, made for the door and began to rage when they held him back.

The poor man's condition embarrassed us. There was neither a van nor an escort available; and I could not simply hand the case over to the first man at hand. Rummaging through my things I discovered at last a few phials of scopolamin in solution. Kristl made hardly any resistance to the injection. The solution, usually so unreliable, had an immediate effect; he will not waken for twelve hours. Perhaps that will be enough to knit together again the snapped strands of his distracted mind.

Before supper, as none but slightly wounded had come in, I went down to

the river-side. The ice there is criss-crossed into numberless clear patterns; glittering needles, leaves, halberts, tiny Gothic forms, often only sketched, sometimes finished to the most delicate detail, are sticking everywhere among the rocks. High up in the pure light floated little wisps of cloud covered with a red plumage soft as a flower, and one could see in looking at those little clouds that they too were composed of ice crystals.

5th December.

I passed the morning with the sappers in the woods, where they were hewing out a half-overgrown path for the wounded who will come in during the next few days; suddenly Hosszuhavas rang with shrieks and rifle firing. When I got back I learned that on the left of our section the Russians had broken through the Austrian lines; that renders our position, it seems, both perilous and worthless. On the summit everything is still quiet.

An orderly brought the command to prepare for retiring; the wounded and sick were to be sent to Palanka without delay. What was I to do with Kristl? He was still sleeping. To send him off at present was impossible; something, too, warned me against it. The sound of the fighting was coming nearer. Rehm kept looking at me; he divined my perplexity. At last he could not remain silent. On the Somme, he said encouragingly, our position had looked far worse than this sometimes and yet had been retrieved; down in the village there were two reserve companies of our regiment, not yet utilised; things would come all right. I got him to make tea and tried to find my way for a little through Glavina's manuscript. The writing is hardly decipherable; but I am on the track of a rhythm. Carried on by it I find meaning enough; already I have divined and filled in several passages, and wherever I catch a word here and there

or a strophe which sounds wrong, the missing words seem to beat themselves out without my help.

"But he who returns, let him keep watch! With a new voice God calls each man. A narrow path is yours, a long day of toil, seldom a feast, seldom a festal song. Watch in your sleep, even as the mountain goat."

. . . . .

It is three o'clock. The firing has gathered force, but at the moment the Russian fire does not predominate. I went over to Kristl again, shook him by the shoulder and called him by name. No use. He is sleeping too profoundly.

"The strong and binding words fade from the children's memories. Ravens bear off the golden books out of the shrine."

"What boots it to bring sacrifices if the call has gone unheeded? The dome falls in on altar and penitents, and broken in twain, still echoing with the

chant of pilgrims, forth into the sea in burning flame floats the bridge."

"The spirit will stand before the door of his own house and be homeless."

. . . . .

Half-past three. The noise of the fighting grows louder and louder. The prospect from the window is blinding. From certain prominences in the foreground the sun-glare strikes so vehemently that the eye cannot endure so much whiteness and perceives it as a pale green. On a wide front our troops are now ready once more for action. The enemy has observed it. Their fire bursts over our glittering helmets, a new kind of shrapnel which sends up twi-coloured clouds of smoke ; it is as if birds with one red and one black wing were continuously breaking from invisible eggs. The soldiers hurry, half running. Suddenly, almost without concealment, Prussian artillery lets fly at the edge of the village, and keeps on firing without intermission. A window

in our dressing-station has been burst in by the air pressure.

. . . . .

"How shall that rise from the grave which never was entombed? Turn yet at the eleventh hour! Raise up again from its dead dust the image of man so often shattered; build it secretly into the sockets of the new walls."

. . . . .

Half-past four. The Major entered hastily, the Adjutant with him. Behind them came wounded, Germans and Russians. The only unhurt man was a young Russian with an olive-brown face and strangely bright hawk-like eyes. They wished to interrogate him; but nobody knew Russian. From the allied troops, some of which were near by, a few soldiers were collected, a Bosnian, a Pole, and a Russian from the Ukraine, who knew Russian, of course, but not a word of German. Question and answer were carried on through four languages. The

young Russian lad, sharply interrogated regarding the position and strength of his regiment, made a transparent attempt to look stupid, and gave the most impossible answers. The Major threatened him with a two days' fast if he did not answer properly. The Russian shrank as if he had been struck, let his head sink, and would not answer another syllable. "A brave fellow," growled the Major, and did not press him any further. Suddenly the Russian started to rummage about in his pockets, shook his head in despair, and began to talk in a hoarse, imploring voice to the Ukrainian. Our excitement awakened, we expected some revelation, the Adjutant sharpened his pencil. But one interpreter after another broke out laughing. We learned at last that the prisoner had only lost his tobacco in the fighting; he begged imploringly for a few cigarettes. The Bosnian gave him some, the Russian lit up, and as nobody was paying any more attention to him,

sat down on a chair, where in a moment his head and arms began to sink. The cigarette fell from his fingers ; he began to snore.

Orderlies entered. The attack had been repulsed. The enemy had lost all the ground they had won. The plain was almost empty now. A flock of ravens flew low over the valley. The Russian was roughly awakened for the march off. The Major commanded me to report at Hosszuhavas to-morrow at midday.

It was quite dark when I went into the next room to look for Kristl. He was up.

" Have the Russians been here ? "

" Yes, some prisoners. They've been sent off already."

" Oh, I see, prisoners," he repeated suspiciously. " All the same, General Brussilov went past in a fiery chariot, didn't he ? "

A low Hungarian sledge with two little shining lamps had passed the window a minute before. That must have been

the fiery chariot. I explained this to him circumstantially and he did not seem to reject my explanation. I explained to him too that he was to go to Palanka to-morrow, and from there could return to his home. He showed no elation. "They're all strange people there behind the lines," he said.

I told him very firmly last of all that now he must go to sleep again at once; but that to-morrow as soon as I called he was to waken, get up without any fear, have tea with white bread and jam, and be all right again. He tried to stand to attention and said: "All right, sir." It only needed a few passes over his face to send him to sleep again.

Before I lie down, another glance at Glavina's manuscript.

"On stones and on bark like wanderers of old carve ye signs for each other, yea, in sand and in snow; and should you meet Death by the way, in your last moments entice with food and fair words

the wild birds from the sky and write purple runes of love on their white feathers."

6th December: midday.

The action began at daybreak and was carried through as neatly as an equation; by nine o'clock there was not a single Russian on Mihályszállás; they have retired now to Monte Ardelle. Our object is gained; before ten o'clock Hungarian officers arrived to find out all about the position which their battalion will take over from us to-morrow.

Kristl was called at eleven, got up at once, and ate with great relish. But as soon as we told him that he could leave for Palanka now furnished with a medical certificate, and from there go home to Bavaria, his face assumed the old refractory look again; but he pulled himself together and at last begged me eagerly but sensibly enough to let him stay here. One would almost imagine that he had partly lost his memory of home; he

seems to fear any change, and appears to cling to the half a dozen faces he knows, as if they were all that he had left in the world. But what am I to do with such an inflammable creature in this smouldering atmosphere? And the Major and Leverenz, what will they say to it? Raab put in hastily that we would have a quiet time now; if Kristl knew anything about ambulance work he could quite well stay for a few days and help a little with the wounded. "I'm a trained stretcher-bearer," Kristl broke in eagerly; "I'm very good at bandaging; I can make arm and leg splints too." I promised to think the matter over and discuss it with the commander and the company commander. Meanwhile he was to remain under inspection on the sick list, and report himself twice a day to me. He went straight off with Raab and tried to make himself useful polishing flasks and instruments and rolling up bandages.

Evening.

During lunch a young soldier in Hungarian uniform came in without knocking, and smiling at everybody walked round us without taking off his gay-ribboned brown felt hat; he never opened his mouth, but looked round the walls, softly touched the cupboard, the pictures, the mirror, the window-panes, and then he gave us a deep intimate look; and one could tell that there was an endless number of things which he wanted to say. Angry at the disturbance, the Major sprang up and made him a sign to go away. Without the least sign of ill-temper or surprise, the young lad came nearer, pulled up his sleeve, and in silence showed us a long, deep scar on his arm, still red and new. At last, while the Major was still swearing at him, he went out very slowly, but not before he had given us another smile from the door. Hardly was he gone when our commander seemed to be sorry for his outburst, and

I took advantage at once of his softened mood to put in my request; I told him that Kristl was of no further use as an infantryman, and that he should either be sent home or else given a trial at some other kind of work. "How could he be employed?"—"As a stretcher-bearer."—"Has he been trained?"—"Yes." The transfer was approved and ratified at once over the telephone by Leverenz, who is in a good mood, intends to give Kristl Christmas leave, and has put in his name for the Iron Cross.

BÁLVÁNYOS-PATAK,

7th December, 1916.

Relieved at midday, we set off for the valley of Bálványos which falls down to Trotusul near Gyimesbükk. The companies wound down by mountain paths; we three, the Major, the Adjutant, and myself, rode along the ridge of the frozen Hidegség, sometimes cutting across it and

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back. Blinded by the strong glare from a splintered ice-block, the three horses shied suddenly and reared back, but soon quietened down again. We went on at a sharp trot, often at a gallop, for the horses did not need much encouragement ; they felt insecure on the ice as long as they went at a gentle pace, and were glad of a chance to strike all the weight of their hoofs into it. We overtook a wounded soldier who was bleeding, the bandage having come loose ; I attended to him and then rode on alone. The sky was streaked with clouds, there was snow in the air. Now the houses of Gyimesbükk appeared, and on the other bank I saw a rustic procession with a train of high-heaped waggons approaching. I seemed to recognise something about the first one ; I galloped across and saw indeed that it was the same beautiful silvery-grey oxen ; the tall woman walked beside them and seemed now to be the leader of many families. She had been the last to

flee ; she was the first to return. The baby was sleeping in the waggon, wound in shawls and covered with furs ; the daughter was pushing behind, the old greybeard tottered last of all. Apart, close by the stream side, walked the young boy thickly gloved, the picture under his arm ; I could catch sight through the broken glass of an infant Jesus in a red little robe against a silver background. I shouted a Hungarian greeting ; " Isten hozta," the mother responded in a clear voice and approached as if she wanted to question me. I had to stretch my physical and spiritual ears to understand her. What she was most anxious to know was whether the houses in Hosszuhavas had been wrecked, and she was visibly relieved when I said no. Then she asked who our enemies had been. When I replied " Russians," she smiled and said that in that case they needn't have fled after all, for the Russians would never have harmed

humble peasant people, and had more respect for women, too, than the Roumanians. As I was making to ride on she drew a bag out of the waggon and reached me a handful of withered pears. I had nothing on me with which to return this hospitable gesture except a newly baked army loaf; but they seemed particularly pleased with that, and now I noticed for the first time that they all looked very pale and wretched; they had certainly been suffering from hunger. The boy was called; he leaned the sacred picture carefully against a stone and ran up with a happy face to receive his share. Rehm was waiting at the foot of the valley. There I looked back once more; the caravans were crossing the Hidegség, the silvery background of the picture glittered clear in the evening light. We reached our quarters at half-past four. It is a farm-house again with low walls hung with carpets. We are seven miles behind the front now; the

natives go about their daily work as if it were peace time.

9th December.

Since I reduced my baggage to the minimum and keep it near at hand I am always in marching order, and so I can employ the few minutes usually spent in hurrying to get ready in trying to set down what has just happened. I passed the morning reading and writing; the medical inspection was fixed for three o'clock in a capacious shed near the sick ward which seemed suitable. I got through it quickly on account of the cold. There were no signs of infection; the business went on smoothly, but at the very end there came a curious interruption. While the last of the quite naked queue were filing past me in the brightest part of the shed, the young mistress of the house unexpectedly entered, half reeling, half dancing, waving a jug in her left hand, her right arm outstretched, and made straight for the men, singing all the

time an incomprehensible rigmarole, Roumanian mixed with Hungarian. She is the childless widow, we have learned, of a soldier who has fallen in Russia, and she looks after her property as well as she can with the help of an old servant and a few maids. Whether she has fallen to drinking because of her grief we cannot tell; in any case yesterday, when we were given a round of free wine, she got hold of part of the men's share in exchange for milk and eggs, and, as it appeared, secured a considerable quantity. In her intoxication she must have espied our unusual parade, perhaps from a stall, and after that she could not rest until she had forced her way in. Of course I should have turned her out at once; but the spectacle held me rooted by its strange fascination; never before had I seen a state of possession so absolute; one could not turn away from it; all one's scruples were silenced. Her face is of that half-Roumanian, half-Magyar type of beauty,

which one meets so often in those parts; normally she must be a very shy, graceful creature. But now her features expressed rigidity and abandon at once; there was no room left in them for laughter or gaiety; the sheer lust for life gave her an almost corpse-like appearance. The impression was heightened by the fact that though it is a weekday she had on all her Sunday finery; the head-dress was of fine black silk, the parchment-yellow vest was lavishly ornamented with gold and coloured embroidery. It was the very youngest men in the battalion who were standing naked there; she approached them, raised her jug to them and drank. Now I noticed for the first time that her eyes were almost closed; she seemed to be looking through her eyelids, as if they were of some transparent tissue. When she made to offer the jug to one of the men she held it out blindly, away from him, so that her behaviour reminded one a little of the mad old woman on the

mountain of Kishavas. Meanwhile the young lads had recovered from their astonishment ; they felt the beginnings of shame and threw their shirts over them. It was time now to end the scene. Dehm and Raab led the woman out. She made no resistance, but went out backwards, her gaze steadily fixed on the room, singing, and waving with her uplifted jug.

After finishing my job I ran against a lance-corporal in the yard, who had brought the orders to march. He was followed by a very old man in Roumanian costume, a thickly muffled baby in his arms ; he took off his cap and asked whether I was an army chaplain. The baby, his great-grandchild, was dying and was still unbaptised ; no priest could be found far and wide ; would I not administer the sacrament ? Corporal Stelzer occurred to me ; he is a theological student and has already had his first ordination ; I had him summoned and handed him over the new-born child,

whose state did not leave much hope. The battalion was already forming up in the road, no time could be lost, and so the future priest went through the simple ceremony (which at need, any Christian, indeed, would be justified in conducting) just where he was in the living room of the young peasant woman, who did not cease her carousing and singing until Dehm sternly rebuked her and commanded her to bring some water without delay, at which she was partly sobered. I admired greatly the cool, brusque manner he assumed in handling her; it lifted him out of his usual self; to me it was as if I saw him now for the first time. Still pretending to be angry with her, he laid the child at last in her arms and ordered her to hold it over the basin and be quiet. Young Stelzer discharged his office with unction; clearly and without haste he recited the "Ego te baptiso," while outside in the road the companies were putting on their haversacks. The

beautiful Bacchante pulled herself together violently; intimidated by the solemnity of the ceremony she never took her eyes from the child whose godmother she had so unexpectedly become. Gradually it seemed as if she found a secret joy in her soft humiliation; all at once I heard a sob and suddenly tears fell on the child, whose breathing was becoming more and more difficult.

I must go; my horse is stamping and neighing and looking round at me. The sky is obscured with low-hanging clouds; tiny flakes are twirling down. The Major and the Adjutant are uneasy, and give no answer when anybody enquires about the goal of the march. Another important mountain must have been lost to the Russians.

PALANKA,

10th December, 1916.

Awakening I thought I saw two pigeons through the misted window-panes and got up to have a better look at the tiny

pair ; it was the two grey ears of a mule waving. The emaciated beast was standing yoked in a sledge, its back quite covered with snow, and now and then scrabbling to find a scrap of moss or herb. A telephone message arrived from the brigade : we are to remain where we are ! I would have liked to read Glavina's manuscript, but I can never get the table to myself, and his words keep humming in my head now of themselves. Down beside the Trotusul parts at the edge are still free from ice ; the water running over the pebbles is limpidly clear, and the stones have such a golden gleam that they reminded me of Wilhelm's letter ; I picked out a few of the brightest ones as souvenirs for the little chap, but their gleam was immediately quenched. I stuck some in my pocket all the same ; Wilhelm will not mind if his father brings him home stones instead of gold ; there are some very pretty ones among them, alabaster-white ones with violent veinings, dull

green ones speckled like eggs, red ones, yellow ones. Climbing up I passed through a pine-wood. An overhanging rock had kept a patch of ground free from the snow; it was overgrown with with broad-leaved ivy. There too I found again a kind of plant which as a boy had reminded me of a palm; in all stages of growth it girdled the green oasis. But whether it is the fault of my eyes, which are no longer those of a child, or whether the plant has deviated from its original pattern—only a few shrubs reminded me here very slightly of the palm; most of them seemed to be running to seed, the stems sprouting rankly with new shoots. So the spirit of life may sometimes conceive a high thought; but the chosen instrument is incapable of patiently enduring the full process of its development; impatient, defeated by its own eagerness, it shatters the melody, and all vanishes like smoke. But what does life care for a million

miscarriages? It can shape the thorn to the leaf, the leaf to the rose; it has time and planets enough to transmute and transgenerate, and some time it will bring forth what the spirit has willed. On the way back I heard sounds of gaiety and song coming from our quarters; the snow is still falling; day here is a permanent whiteness, an unending hushed stir.

KÓSTELEK,

12th December, 1916:
half-past eleven at night.

Everybody is asleep, and I am half asleep myself; but I want to set down our march and arrival; perhaps tomorrow there will be no time. Formerly I could never understand why people kept diaries; but now writing these things is to me like the bread-crumbs which Hänsel and Gretel strewed in the forest so as to make sure of finding their way home again. True, when the children actually set out for home at last the birds

had pecked up everything—but that was after all the real beginning of the fairy tale.

The snow-fall continued all forenoon. The men lit fires in great tin kettles in the barracks; some washed themselves, others lay smoking and reading on the half-green maize straw. Everybody felt now for the first time how completely exhausted he was, everybody was glad of the persistent falling snow which guaranteed a reprieve. Outside I saw a soldier making up a snowball with bread-crumbs and light-heartedly throwing it over the roof of the barracks. In Lower Bavaria here and there people still sprinkle snowballs with consecrated wine at Christmas time and throw them over the house-top to preserve it from evil. But after twelve o'clock the snow ceased; an east wind cleared the sky, and presently one could hear again shells from heavy batteries crashing through the valley. At two o'clock came marching orders. We kept

along the Trotusul, sometimes over Hungarian territory, sometimes over Roumanian. For a stretch we passed through the Russians' field of observation, whose mountain lines jutted out there quite near us. The Russians noticed us, but their aim was bad ; their shells landed in the river and sent up columns of water, but nobody was hurt. We hastened through Ciugesu without stopping and climbed upwards through a side valley. Everywhere snow was piled in a confusion of high drifts ; blue walls of shadow fell against walls of burning silver. In Cyges we waited for over an hour, nobody knew for what. The Major had ridden forward ; the Adjutant, strangely depressed and uncommunicative, gave no information about the destination of our march. On the bare mountain-side the road went straight up again, and while we at the rear were still marching far below in the cold shadow, we could see the first sections ascending high above us and

vanishing behind rocks which gleamed orange-red in the sun. That uniform, obedient procession of grey soldiers wandering into the unknown out of the sharply etched brilliance perpetually drew our eyes upwards; we cheered ourselves with the thought that we would soon be up there in the high radiant pass, and forgot the difficult going.

Up above, during a short rest in a snow-field, a man reported sick, one of the new men who only joined us at Palanka. While he was approaching he had to stand the running jeers of his section: one man even made a move to head him off and only desisted at my command. "I've been waiting for leave this twenty-eight months," shouted old Lutz. "I've grown bent and grey in the war, and you give in on the second day, you paper-faced hound!"—"Stick it, comrade, stick it!" another jeered. The young lad—I saw a pampered boyish face under a steel helmet far too big for

him—protested almost weeping that he had voluntarily reported for front-line service, and would come back as soon as he was fit, but now he could not go on any longer. They jeered at him. His breath smoked white in the chill air, and his eyes were glowing with fever; but the others had no regard for that. Exasperated by weariness and ignorance of the future, they hated with the hatred of the damned any one who wished to escape from their common hell. I decided simply to ignore the importunate shouters and get the business over quickly; I felt the man's pulse, enquired after certain symptoms, and was about to take out one of my red-bordered cards so as to write the necessary entry on it and fasten it to the sick man's cloak and send him back to hospital, when Dehm ran up with an urgent air, apologised for his delay and began at once to turn the trivial occurrence into an important occasion; he set the two huge leather cases end to end in the

snow, made the man lie down on them, commanded him to unbutton his cloak and tunic, and reported punctiliously that Infantryman Lohr was now ready for inspection. Bit by bit I began to comprehend Dehm's superior wisdom. He had divined how infectious the disposition to report sick might become in such circumstances ; a hard-bitten soldier himself, he preferred to appear cruel rather than see our long precarious discipline loosened. Now the suspicious priers would learn that there was no indulgence with us, that we calculated the severity of every sickness with the care of shopkeepers. Respectfully but firmly he presented me in the rôle of the inexorable medical officer ;—what choice was left me but to tap and sound the shivering man, and to take his temperature as if he were lying in hospital? Silence fell round us ; under the spell of the clinical ceremony every objection died. Looking at the feeble figure lying there the others realised

gradually how erect and strong they were, and when the young lad was clothed and belted again and given his sick-card he stamped unmolested to Palanka.

A little before five o'clock we halted on a high precipitous slope ; down below in the valley we could see a half-frozen stream. Among houses camp-fires were burning in whose light Austrian soldiers were quietly moving about. We stood and looked. From the east echoed sounds of fighting ; the star-shells and the explosions made one broad summit look like a volcano, but only for a minute ; then the mountain was clothed once more in the same quiet grey as the others. But around us there was a weird play of light from the sinking rim of the sun. The shadows lay vivid green on the roseate snow, a little birch tree was picked out in purest emerald, and looking at ourselves we saw figures of green. Nobody wanted to talk ; one could hear fragments of frozen snow falling with the

tinkle of light metal. All at once it grew colder, and with that the sunset light had vanished from the white of the landscape like the glaze from porcelain. The Adjutant, consulting his map, explained that we were standing over the Sulta Valley, and that the houses were those of the Hungarian frontier village Sóstelek ; from here we had still almost four miles to put behind us before we reached Kóstelek.

As there was no footpath to be found, we clambered and slid down as best we could. Passing the camp-fires, whose glow fanned our cheeks, we kept along the road, from now on with the front lines behind us. After many stops we reached Kóstelek at eleven. The waning moon was already high, two serenely glittering planets just above it. Along with the Adjutant, the assistant medical officer, the orderly officer, and a few telephone operators, I was accommodated in the roomy kitchen of a little house

which stood apart on a hill. The room was half lit by a smoky lamp. At our entrance a handsome woman rose completely dressed from a wide couch of hay, along with her two little girls who were quite drowned in sleep. She regarded us, alert and composed. At last with a proud gesture of hospitality she gave us to understand that she would resign the couch to us and sleep on some straw beside the stove ; in all the other rooms it was too cold for the children. We declined the offer, and let her know that we would stay where we were and disturb her as little as possible.

While we sat down at the table the three of them turned their faces to the wall and recited a half-audible prayer, now and then bowing their heads and crossing themselves, in doing which the little girls struck their breasts each time with all their might. I bent forward to see the crucifix or holy image to which they were showing such reverence ; but

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I could only see a nail, and underneath it a white square space with a black rim on the bare wall. There the holy picture had hung, it must have been there for many years ; now it was gone, perhaps used up by soldiers for firewood—who knows ?—but still visible to the eyes of the faithful. I thought of Glavina's dream ; how, a child, he had walked over mountains and read enchanting things on an empty page, unperturbed by the tempest and the calls of the dead.

The little girls soon fell asleep again ; the mother sat for a while still on the edge of the bed, her chin on her hand. In spite of marks of suffering, her white pinched face had a wonderful calmness and clarity. She must have suffered terribly, and now she did not look for kindness from us. Then for the first time I became aware of the extreme bareness of the room. Not only the holy image had been taken ; other pictures,

too, as well as a crucifix and a clock, were only indicated by dust and cobwebs.

The Adjutant became more communicative; he divulged that the Russians had pushed far forward, endangering the Gyimes Pass: we must be prepared for a rough time. Besides, the situation was not clear; he at least had not the faintest idea which mountains were in the enemy's possession.

13th December, seven o'clock, morning.

I try to recall my dreams now ever more reluctantly; but this one was so clear, so full of meaning. We were back in France again, lying ready in the melancholy wasted region by Margny-aux-cerises. A strong wind was blowing; above us passed a monotonous exchange of shells. Terror lay upon me. My body had almost completely lost all weight; I felt light as a feather and expected any minute that the rising wind would lift me up and carry me across to the French

lines. Then something rubbed against my elbow and, behold, it was Matchka the grey kitten which I had watched dying in Kézdi-Almás. It had grown big and handsome; the white fluff on its neck glowed like fire. "How are you now?" I asked, and made to stroke it; but it sprang with a great bound into a shell-hole filled with water; then it vanished and after a while emerged again, in its mouth a gleaming shell inscribed with red signs, which it carried back and with a humble obeisance laid before me. How happy I felt! The shell is heavy, I said to myself; so long as I hold it in my hand the strongest wind can't carry me away. But when I took it up it was no longer a shell, but a floundering dull golden fish spotted with red. "It must be fried!" a familiar voice shouted behind me. I looked round; there stood Vally by an open hearth, Wilhelm beside her, and he too shouted: "It must be fried!" Smiling strangely Vally

took the fish and gave it to Wilhelm, who carried it to the hearth. Then she lay down beside me; we threw our arms round each other and clung together, and then I was a little startled to find that though she was Vally she was Regina too at the same time, and then again the Hungarian woman who was sleeping here in the strange room. But how I loved these three women in *one* shape! How essentially they were *one* entity, omnipotently present each in the other! Somewhere, indeed, in the depths where the dream itself seemed to be dreaming, there was something mysterious, a silent hindrance, which would not let us quite reach happiness; but that too vanished. She does not know any German, and I know no Hungarian; the thought suddenly flew through my mind, and it gave me a feeling of boundless freedom; and in rapture I felt the weight returning to my limbs again. Thereupon a blue cloud which seemed to be irradiated from

within, detached itself from us, rose up and floated away to the distant horizon. We stood up and attentively watched this cloud, from whose edges long rows of tiny, sparkling dots resembling insects were defiling. They drew near and became tall and warlike. Finally I saw that they were really soldiers with silvery-blue steel helmets led by generals with red epaulettes ; in direct, glittering flight, and in countless numbers, they swept over us and through us as through smoke. All at once Wilhelm stood beside me girded for a journey, a staff in his right hand, in his left a plate with the fish. I stood up, gave the boy a portion, and then ate myself. But hardly had I swallowed a morsel when I began to comprehend that it had really been three different women whom I had embraced, and this deeply troubled me. But Wilhelm left me no time to brood. " Father, it's time to go ! " he cried, impatiently striking his staff into the ground. Then

we walked towards a horizon which was all in flames, and I opened my eyes and found myself looking into the clear fire in the stove. The young mistress of the house was already setting a huge kettle on the hissing iron.

. . . . .

Everybody has got up now except the two little girls, who are still sleeping. The Adjutant wished me good morning and asked if I did not get weary of eternally scribbling in my notebook ; he had been racking his brains to guess what extraordinary things I could find to record ; at bottom the whole war was a horribly boring and monotonous business. Besides, I would have to be careful not to mention anything of military importance ; we were coming to an endless and difficult region ; quite possibly we might be surprised, and if I had the misfortune to be taken prisoner it might cause trouble. I succeeded in reassuring him. The young mistress of the house is still busy

at the hearth. Of all the faces which I have encountered in those frontier regions until now hers is the purest, the most serene and resolute; it has nothing indefinite, nothing incomplete; it stands in the same relation to most of the others as the finished picture to the sketch. My weariness of yesterday has flown, my bruised feet are healed. I feel certain that it was the primitive health-giving proximity of a woman that made my sleep so refreshing. The wintry air tastes as if an acid mineral had been dissolved in it. The sun drains the light from the frail bluish moon. In the east the ice on the Sulta glitters, an ethereal yellow. All at once the cannons begin to fire, and the children awaken.

SULTA VALLEY,

eleven o'clock in the morning.

At eight o'clock we set off and reached Sóstelek again in less than an hour. We saw the inhabitants working in their

yards ; some boys were making a snow man. An admiring crowd was standing round the quarters of an Austrian brigade ; a huge dead she-bear hung by her hind paws from a balcony between her two cubs, and two hussars were already raising their long knives to cut the carcass up. The soldiers and the inhabitants, women with poppy-red head-cloths among them, were gathered round the unusual operation, and nobody vouchsafed a glance for our everyday hurrying column.

We went on until nine through the unravaged country between wooded hills, from which the grey huts of Prussian sappers looked out like hermits' cells ; it was as if we were walking in an old picture and becoming part of it. There was a touch of thawing warmth in the air ; the melting snow hung light as a rag from the strong branches. The valley was full of birds ; we saw ravens who perpetually made queer side-springs as if someone had stepped on their toes ;

bullfinches, their breasts rosy as if bleeding, fluttered thick over the road. All at once the valley curved, the woods disappeared, and presently in the contracting river bed the war announced itself once more. Broken wheels and gun-carriages lay on the ice, and near them cannons with bent and battered mouths. A flock of birds, blue-tits, nuthatches, and yellow-hammers, rose from a clump of pines; within it, almost untouched by snow, lay the complete skeleton of a horse, the four iron shoes still on the hoofs, the whole, indeed, held together more by the ice than the fragile casing of the joints; of muscle or sinew nothing remained, and a little skin on the skull was all that was still left for the dainty pointed beaks of the birds to pick. We almost overlooked a beautifully cleaned and bleached human skull near by, on which a Roumanian cap was still perched jauntily; whatever else was left of its owner lay hidden under the snow. Some of the men swore that they

could hear sounds of fighting on the left ; I thought I did too ; but others questioned it. Several thought it precarious to advance along this narrow ravine where our gaze was blocked and where nobody knew the country. New mountains rose, last of all a broad-backed, dark-wooded peak which barred the valley eastwards. It is called Mount Vadas ; the day before yesterday, it seems, the Russians entrenched themselves on its summit. At one place the road divided, but soon after joined again ; where it forked rose a saw-mill with extensive out-buildings. Stacks of German and Austrian ammunitions were piled up there, and the Major reasonably enough blamed the negligence which had not yet cleared it away ; a single shot from the enemy might cause untold damage. But from where could we get in a couple of days the mules, vehicles, and men to cart it all away ? So there was nothing for us but to march past disapprovingly and leave everything

as it was. In half an hour we reached the wooden hut where I am stationed now with my men. It is quite tolerably fitted up as a dressing-station. Staff-Surgeon S., whom I relieved, has given us a graphic account of his experiences during these last days. A few platoons from his battalion had just occupied the little village of Sulta, which lies behind Mount Vadas, when the Russians, who were thought to be retreating, attacked with fury in the middle of a snow-storm. A German platoon commander fell ; most of his men were killed or taken prisoner. The doctor managed to leave his billet by the back door just as a Kirghiz officer was coming into the front yard. His Zeiss field-glasses, a case of bandages, and a beautiful irreplaceable fur cloak had to be left behind. The following morning Palatine troops brought the enemy advance to a halt ; but the Vadas summit had been lost. The two days spent here in the valley, however, S. described as a

picnic ; not a single shot has come this way yet. Of course, he added, laughing, the forbearance of the Russians might very well be due to the difficult and snowed-up ways, which must greatly delay the transport of artillery. Our Major is convinced that our opponents can overlook every nook of the valley with their telescopes ; they won't let us enjoy ourselves here for long. "The assistant medical officer," he decided, "must go with us to the foot of Mount Vadas in any case. We'll dig ourselves in there ; I don't think there's a better-protected position. But if you would rather stay here I have nothing to say against it." I had thought out the arrangements of the room by that time and found lots of reasons for staying, but I noticed that the old man left me behind with reluctance.

Evening, nine o'clock.

Everything is quiet ; neither sick nor wounded have arrived ; at odd intervals

a rifle report comes from the mountain. With Raab I have made out our overdue report, and have started to write some letters as well, but sleep is finally mastering me. The hut is full of tobacco smoke ; the paraffin lamp is burning badly and the flame makes grimaces at me. All the rest have stretched themselves out, except Kristl, who is still making splints. He always does his duty quietly and willingly, only sometimes with a certain apprehensiveness.

Friday, 15th December, morning.

In my dreams I saw a black cloud hanging on the summit of Mount Vadas, and on awakening went out at once to see if my first dream in the new place was to be fulfilled. But the atmosphere is still more limpid than yesterday ; with icy claws the frost encroaches further on the flowing stream. Wounded have arrived with bad news ; their satisfaction over their shattered hands and arms is unconcealed. The Kirghiz troops have

fenced off the whole wood at the summit with barbed wire ; unassailable, they sit high up above the German position, which they can overlook quite easily. Our men have to crouch behind fragments of rock again ; yesterday afternoon cost five of them their lives. In the little valley everything is still quiet. I have poured myself out some wine and am rummaging once more among the sheets of Glavina's manuscript. Unluckily several of them have been lost, and I have to spin many passages out of my memory, and in the process much of my own composition is involuntarily incorporated. What does it matter ! Two or three grains of *calium permanganicum* are sufficient to colour a whole carafe of water.

Eleven o'clock.

The Major and the Staff Surgeon were right in their conjectures ; the Russians are beginning to bombard the road with artillery of light and medium calibre ;

some foot-soldiers have already fallen a sacrifice to them. There has been much laughter over a young soldier who was wounded in the foot and stubbornly maintained that he could not run, that he must be carried or conveyed somehow to Sóstelek, but who began to run like a hare at the first burst of shell-fire. Rehm and Raab are convinced that not a stick of our hut will be left in an hour's time. Report sent to the Major, and a query whether we may shift our dressing-station forward now to Mount Vadas. Rehm volunteered to deliver the note, but made the condition that nobody should go with him. The artillery would scarcely fire on a single soldier, he thought. I gave him what was left of the wine for his journey and ordered the men to pack our things.

Twelve o'clock.

We are lying behind a jutting ledge of the ravine side; I fancy the place is quite well chosen; in any case there is

not another to be seen anywhere. The Russians are doing their best to drive us out and are not sparing their ammunition ; but, as an old artillery man, Raab has convinced us that it cannot be done however well they aim. I almost lost my chance of escaping by a hair's breadth. Raab is not yet tired of telling how urgently he impressed on me that it was time to leave the hut. I agreed, he says, and commanded him to go on ahead and promised to follow immediately ; but then Glavina's dark sayings must have kept me absorbed longer than I knew. Outside a shell struck, a dud that remained buried in the ground. The hut rocked and crashed in ; dust and rubble fell down on my papers. I looked round me ; I was alone, but I heard my men shouting for me in the distance. They could not restrain their laughter when they saw me clambering down the Sulta Valley towards them, the manuscript in my left hand, in my right the half-empty wine-glass. Soon

other shells struck, and the wooden shed collapsed like a house of cards.

Two o'clock.

Rehm has returned safely. The Major has given orders to transfer the dressing-station to Sóstelek during the next pause in the firing. We can be of more use there, he thinks, than anywhere else; and we'll soon have work enough to do. Rehm says that the Major enquired for me and my men with a cordiality which until now he has never shown, and was visibly pleased over our safe condition; but for the rest looked sadly aged and worried. Lieutenant H. too sent greetings; from his position he had followed the firing in the valley and had thought that we must all be dead or wounded. The fighting has not yet begun, but the position is becoming unendurable; if the Kirghiz troops do not attack, they will have to be attacked. To-night a detachment of heavy bomb-throwers will be

sent up the mountain to wreck the enemy's lines. Beside us things have become quieter ; only an odd shot falls now. I may as well set down a rumour that the German Kaiser has made a peace offer. We are getting ready for our march to Sóstelek.

Three o'clock.

In future wars by sea and land and air very queer situations are bound to arise. But I wonder if there has ever yet been one like ours at present. At half-past two the Russians stopped firing ; in deep silence we marched back, and had arrived within some five hundred yards of the big saw-mill when one of the Prussian batteries stationed a little in front of Sóstelek began firing. They must have worked some damage among the enemy, for a wild continuous counter-fire was let loose on our infantry, and soon we could not doubt any longer that our little platoon, too, was being aimed at. I considered turning back, but that

seemed still more precarious than going on, and so we started to run towards the saw-mill. A number of shells had crashed behind us, and the last had just missed, when one came which, as soon as it went off, we knew was bearing straight for us. Sparks flew up, and as I clasped both hands round the back of my head to protect it, I was flung down and half buried under clods; then silence fell. Testing my limbs and joints, I found that I was unhurt; then I stood up and looked for the others. Rehm, covered with earth and ice, and slightly bleeding from a wound on the cheek, was just getting up; a little embarrassed, he smiled at me; the others were standing sideways, clamped like statues to the rocky wall, and staring into the deep, black shell-hole, which now made a chasm from side to side of the road. Nobody was seriously wounded. Now the fury of the Russians seemed to turn away from us, and relieved that the

damage was so slight, we made to go on again, when a new thing happened. A shell flew into the middle of the saw-mill, which we had almost reached; an explosion followed, then another, then five together, then a countless number, and everywhere, from the roofs and the walls, the flames burst out. If we had run on at that instant as fast as we could, we would certainly have got through, and would now be sitting comfortably in Sóstelek. But slightly stunned as we were, we could do nothing but gaze at the spectacle with shuddering fascination, and so missed the favourable moment. The enemy on their side soon saw what they had done; like mischievous boys they fired wildly into the conflagration, and one after another, in frightfully protracted acceleration, the solid stacks of cartridges, hand-grenades, shrapnel, and shells continuously exploded. We did not need to press ourselves against the walls of the ravine; the violent waves of

air held us there. Within and around us there was a humming vibration, as if the air, the rocks, and we ourselves were all charged with electricity. The splinters flew far. Lance-Corporal Junker had his parotid gland punctured by one of them ; the blood spurted in a long, thin line on to the snow, but was easily stanched. I got a scratch on my left hand ; it did not bleed much. Beside the saw-mill itself, especially on the open side, the splinters must be flying thick. So the enemy had in a way planted a fortress in our path, which we could not get past. He still went on firing violently ; our batteries, hidden in the distance, continued to provoke him ; he could not discover their position and revenged himself on the handful of men whom he saw. Little Lüttich, seized perhaps by a kind of agoraphobia, took it into his head to clamber out of the ravine and reconnoitre the open country ; he came back with a smashed shoulder. Badly commanded,

the batteries on the summit continued to waste their ammunition ; soon they will have exhausted it. When one closes one's eyes one has a vision of a dreadful battle contracted into the smallest possible space, a battle which will leave no trace but bones and ashes. How slowly the sun sinks ! But the worst hour comes to an end. By five it will be getting dark. By seven we should be in Sóstelek.

A quarter to four.

The sun is already leaving the lower slopes. We are not cold, the conflagration sends heat over here, and the snow is dropping from the rocks. The sheds round the saw-mill are in flames now. The explosions continue. Up on the summit they are still watchful. Rehm, thinking that the danger was past, went experimentally for some distance towards the front, drew their fire, and returned unhurt. Above us the light is hard and clear ; the warmth has gone out of the

air again. On a birch tree near by hangs a tiny grey bird with a white breast; pecking at the snow on the twigs it hops indefatigably to and fro. None of the men is downcast. Those intense moments when death and life confront each other—it is as if they strengthened and purified the elementary substance of our nature; and as a bad leaden bell dipped in pure oxygen all at once sounds like a silver one, so every man begins now to give out the ring of his own essential nature. Some of them tell stories of their childhood, and almost every one wants to give something away to a comrade. I was greatly afraid lest Kristl should have a relapse; but he is quite unperturbed. He bandaged Lüttich in approved style, then out of a piece of bread kneaded a droll little bear, and stuck one of his gold coins in its mouth. He set the little figure in a rocky niche like a votive offering and made it fast with sticks and stones; some time, he said, the bear

would be found, and then it would belong to the finder, even if he happened to be a Russky. Lüttich has had some laudanum and is asleep. As for me, the dead man's verses are helping me to pass the time. To get a notion of the whole I read all the sheets one after another, at first quietly to myself, until I noticed that the men were listening ; then I told them it was a poem which had been found on the dead soldier Glavina, and read it again in a clear voice :

"Let us build up a cairn on the mountain of Kishavas, a trophy to the slain on its icebound floor of rocks and juniper !

"Obedient, uncomplaining, unregarded, they lie bleeding on the alien stones where not an oak tree puts out leaf.

"What will the end be, who can tell ? Darkly brood the nations. Have a care, O friends ! Should you see a dying man entreat him humbly that he die a clean death, thinking no evil. He is but a

forerunner. We all moulder into dust. Dead hands, cover them with dark sprays of the blue-green juniper !

" But he who returns, let him keep watch ! With a new voice God calls each man. A narrow path is yours, a long day of toil, seldom a feast, seldom a festal song. Watch in your sleep, even as the mountain goat.

" Let your thoughts be sober truth. Malignant lies have struck the nations. Almost extinguished is the Shining One who from the Poles wards off the spirits of evil.

" Circling above our sleep glides a dumb despair, beaked like a bird, but wingless, uncreative, though radiating force. Gleefully he bows down all, himself unbowed.

" The strong and binding words fade from the children's memories. Ravens bear off the golden books out of the shrine.

" What boots it to bring sacrifices if

the call has gone unheeded? The dome falls in on altar and penitents, and broken in twain, still echoing with the chant of pilgrims, forth into the sea in burning flame floats the bridge.

"The spirit will stand before the door of his own house and be homeless. Grass grows on the threshold of the Lord and Master. His soul is turned to ice, clear, round, thick ice, and all desire is lamed and troubled like the fish that dart beneath the ice.

"Thou who returnest, keep thou watch! Cast off the little dreams! Set in their stead a clear forgetting! Seal thyself in a law of thine own making, and until thou hast thrice paced round the sacred fire sleep not beside thy bride!

"Blessed is he who spreads his pinions in the abyss of time. Out of evil he creates good. Oh, when a world is quenched and the new world is yet strange and troubled, there comes always a deep blue hour of freedom and bliss

when the rhythmic wave lifts up our spirits till they glimpse the new shore and first begin to take joy in flight.

"The sun, that master soul, knows neither birth nor death, and is his fire not in our bosoms? Is there not warmth of loving deeds both near and far in every hour that goes past? Is not the Eternal within us wafted from sea to sea and from star to star like a breath? And those gentle breathings, do they not engender the rushing winds of God?

"Come then, messenger of grace! Dwell no longer afar on the mountain-tops, consorting with dead seers and cloud-drenched eagles. Descend with burning love among your brethren who yearn for you in ardour beside their blackened hearths. Wake, O wake for us the call!

"How shall that rise from the grave which never was entombed? Turn yet at the eleventh hour! Raise up again from its dead dust the image of man so

often shattered; build it secretly into the sockets of the new walls.

"It is no strange truth that you proclaim; we have learned much already. On the uncertain border line 'twixt light and darkness draw near to us with singing. Whom you salute, his way of life is changed. Your heavenly song flows into every mind.

"You transform cruel chains into gossamer reins of magic. The captive leads his captor and both are free.

"And he who, bound by tradition, rooted in the underworld, scantily nourished on milk and corn, turns back to his old ways, track him on Sunday down. Reveal to him the danger and beauty of life! So may he gather courage and win manifold fruits from the earth. Let him keep only what is his due. Let him piously cast the first of the crop into the pillar of eternal fire, that the food of the spirit may be increased.

"On stones and on bark like wanderers

of old carve ye signs for each other, yea, in sand and in snow; and should you meet Death by the way, in your last moments entice with food and fair words the wild birds from the sky and write purple runes of love on their white feathers.

"But we shall build a cairn on the mountain of Kishavas, a trophy to our dead on its icebound floor of rocks and juniper.

"Still locked in winter lie Roumania's peaks, but in the sky there is spring. The skin of the birch turns brown and shrivels away, and lo! the new skin shines silvery beneath. We drift like leaves into strange unknown fields—what will spring up from our decay?

"Faith, garnered like star-seed, shall glow with a steadfast light. After moons and years it may strike perchance on the clear crystal of the frozen soul, which remains ice, nor will it ever melt, but like a curved glass unwittingly may bend the many-coloured rays on to a far-off point,

where new flame will start from the ancient earth.

"Mouldering are the dead on the mountain of Kishavas, rusted our swords and forgotten our laurels, but once again in the joy of innocence men sit down to the bread and wine which were bitter to us. Wild ancestral lusts have fertilised the crumbling mould, the soul is free for undreamed-of flights. From the blood that was spilt rise fearless youths, and old precepts are turned into song."

Eleven o'clock at night.

They listened to all of it in silence. At length Raab said that he had properly understood very little of it, but he liked it; it made him feel in high spirits. The others looked down at the burning buildings and said nothing. Unfortunately another surprise was sprung on us. Little Lüttich suddenly got up and started off reeling towards the saw-mill. Someone cried, "Halt!" another ran after him,

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but he stumbled on, perhaps in fever, perhaps in a dazed condition from the laudanum, and suddenly, feebly tottering, collapsed on the ground. We brought him back, but he was dead. A small splinter of iron was sticking in his left temple. At about a quarter to five the Russians let us have another broadside, but only for half a minute. At five o'clock, as if by order, the explosions in the saw-mill stopped. Dusk and night took possession of the valley. Kristl made a cross for Lüttich, and put his name on it and the date. His watch and identification disc were taken off and safely stowed, after which we buried him. The ground was frozen a long way down, it took us more than two hours to finish. The snow and the stars gave us a glimmer of light. About ten o'clock, as the moon was rising, we reached Sóstelek.

THE END

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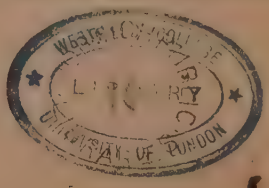

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